

8-1971

# The Constitutional Union Party in Kentucky

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THE CONSTITUTIONAL UNION PARTY IN KENTUCKY

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of History

Western Kentucky University

Bowling Green, Kentucky

JK  
2275  
.K43  
K4x

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

001

Master of Arts

JK  
2275  
.K43  
K4x

by

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August 1971

JK  
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THE CONSTITUTIONAL UNION PARTY IN KENTUCKY

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## PREFACE

During the period immediately preceding the Civil War, there arose a new political party, the Constitutional Union party. While nearly every other phase of the era around the Civil War has been covered exhaustively, comparatively, very little has been written about the Union movement and its attempt to prevent the war. What has been written about the Union party deals primarily with the movement at the national level. It is the goal of this author to present a history of the Union movement in Kentucky and the part played in the national party by Kentuckians.

The writer is indebted to many people for their assistance in the researching and writing of this thesis. The author would like to thank the librarians of the Margie Helm Library, Western Kentucky University, in the Kentucky Division, Louisville Free Public Library, and in the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. A special thanks to the members of the thesis committee--Dr. Lowell H. Harrison, Dr. J. Crawford Crowe, and Dr. Marion B. Lucas. Finally, the author wishes to extend grateful appreciation to his wife, Anita Kelly, for her understanding and assistance at every stage of the researching and writing.



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## CHAPTER I

### UNION OUT OF TURMOIL

Kentucky was one of the strongholds of the Constitutional Union party in the election of 1860. The party, although a minority group nationally, was different from many third party movements. It was not a radical group attempting to impose its extreme views on the American public. Rather, it drew its strength from the conservatives of the country and, led by John J. Crittenden, tried to find a compromise position between the Democrats and Republicans for the troublesome slavery issue that was dividing the nation. Much of this conservative strength came from the defunct Whig party.

Kentucky politics had been dominated by the Whigs since 1836 when their candidate, Judge James Clarke, was elected governor. In 1837 the state elections showed the rising strength of the new party as they virtually swept the elections.<sup>1</sup> In 1840 and 1844 the Whigs united behind their gubernatorial candidates, Robert P. Letcher and Judge William Owsley, and were victorious, by margins of 16,000 and 4,500, respectively.<sup>2</sup> The first foreshadowment of a wavering of that position came in 1848. The two leading members

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<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth Kinkead, A History of Kentucky (New York, 1896), 141.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 143-44.

of the party in Kentucky were Henry Clay and Crittenden. Despite his advancing years, Clay wanted the Whig nomination for president, but Crittenden came out in favor of Zachary Taylor.<sup>3</sup> Taylor received the nomination at the national convention and won the election, carrying Kentucky by 17,000 votes.<sup>4</sup> For his faithful service during the campaign Crittenden was offered his choice of cabinet positions. He declined any, believing it was his duty to serve as Governor of Kentucky, a position to which he had just been elected.<sup>5</sup> Not only was Crittenden offered a cabinet post, but "contemporary observers...concurred in the belief that Crittenden actually selected the cabinet for Taylor...[when] he discussed all possibilities with Crittenden during his twenty-four-hour visit in Frankfort."<sup>6</sup> The rift between the two party giants augured ill for the future of the Whigs in Kentucky. From that time on, there was a distinct coolness between them.<sup>7</sup>

Upon the death of Taylor, President Fillmore requested that Governor Crittenden accept the position of Attorney General of the United States. In a letter to his son Thomas, Henry Clay noted his feelings concerning Crittenden.

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<sup>3</sup>Wallace B. Turner, Kentucky in a Decade of Change (Lexington, 1954), 10.

<sup>4</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, November 12, 1848. See Appendix 1.

<sup>5</sup>Mrs. Chapman Coleman, The Life of John J. Crittenden (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1873), I, 326-30.

<sup>6</sup>Albert D. Kirwan, John J. Crittenden (Lexington, 1962), 247.

<sup>7</sup>Turner, Decade of Change, 11.

In the appointment of Mr. Crittenden I acquiesced. Mr. F. asked how we stood? I told him that the same degree of intimacy between us which once existed, no longer prevailed; but that we were on terms of civility. I added that, if he thought of introducing him to his Cabinet, I hoped that no consideration of my present relations to him would form any obstacle.<sup>8</sup>

Crittenden resigned as governor and assumed his new duties on July 22, 1850.<sup>9</sup> He arrived in Washington in time to aid Daniel Webster and Stephen A. Douglas push through the individual portions of Clay's Omnibus Bill, that became known as the Compromise of 1850. Before signing the acts into law, President Fillmore requested an opinion on the constitutionality of the Compromise from his Attorney General. Crittenden replied that, "It is [my] clear conviction that there is nothing...in any part of the provisions of the act, which...in any manner conflict with the Constitution..."<sup>10</sup> Crittenden was a southerner and the owner of a few house servants, but, like Clay, was doctrinally against the institution of slavery, feeling it would die out. "The tide of history, he thought, was inevitably flowing against slavery, but he believed agitation of the subject unprofitable in the inflamed mood of the times."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Henry Clay to Thomas Clay, August 6, 1850, in Calvin Colton, ed., Life, Correspondence and Speeches of Henry Clay (6 vols., New York, 1864), IV, 611.

<sup>9</sup>Coleman, Crittenden, I, 377.

<sup>10</sup>John J. Crittenden to Millard Fillmore, September 18, 1850, in M. W. McCluskey, Political Textbook Encyclopedia (Philadelphia, 1860), 233.

<sup>11</sup>Kirwan, Crittenden, 268.

The decade of the 1850's in Kentucky opened with the long sought Union saving compromise but closed with the worsening sectional strife that led to the Civil War. By the end of the decade, Kentucky political leaders were among the few in the country still actively working for another compromise. This was rather surprising since Kentucky had endured as much, if not more, turmoil as many other areas of the country. The 1850's saw the fall of Kentucky's Whig party; it brought about the rise and fall of the American or Know-Nothing party; the rise of an emancipationist or abolitionist party, the "Black Republicans"; and a split in the Democratic party. Late in the decade, the disorganized conservatives regrouped as the opposition party that ultimately evolved into the Constitutional Union party of Kentucky.

One evidence of the decline of the Whigs was the state Constitutional Convention of 1849 called for by the Democrats. The first direct evidence of decline was the election of James Guthrie, a Democrat, over Whig Archibald Dixon by seven votes for the presidency of the convention.<sup>12</sup> The revised Constitution was ratified by the voters in May 1850 by a vote of 71,653 for and 20,302 against.<sup>13</sup> Sensing their new found favor, the Kentucky Democrats met in Frankfort on January 8, 1851 and

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<sup>12</sup>R. Sutton, ed., Report of the Debates and Proceedings of the Convention for the Revision of the Constitution of the State of Kentucky, 1849 (Frankfort, 1849), 15.

<sup>13</sup>Frankfort Commonwealth, May 28, 1850.

nominated Lazarus W. Powell for governor.<sup>14</sup> In their party platform the Democrats claimed credit for the reforms in the new Constitution. The Whigs countered with a party faithful, Archibald Dixon. In the days after the Compromise of 1850, there again arose a restlessness over slavery and a foreboding that trouble was yet to come from that source. From 1850 to 1860 the antislavery movement picked up momentum in the North and to a far lesser extent in the South. In 1851 the dread ideology raised its political head on Kentucky soil when Cassius Clay ran for Governor on an emancipationist ticket, often referred to by the opposition presses as an abolition ticket.<sup>15</sup>

Strong as the excitement was concerning the governor's race, equally important was the election for a new Congressman from the Eighth or Ashland District, home of Henry Clay, and the most consistent Whig fortress in the state. The Democrats felt that if they could break the Whigs at Ashland they would receive national attention; it might even foreshadow things to come in the 1852 presidential election. Therefore, they nominated the prominent young politician, John C. Breckinridge, to vie for the seat. The Whigs, equally aware of the far reaching effects of the election, nominated Leslie Combs to carry their standard.<sup>16</sup> Both major parties embraced the Compromise of 1850 as the safest and surest way to maintain peace and Union. They each vowed to

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<sup>14</sup>Turner, Decade of Change, 13-17.

<sup>15</sup>Nathaniel Shaler, Kentucky (New York, 1884), 217.

<sup>16</sup>Turner, Decade of Change, 15-16.

stand by the Union until outrages became so oppressive that Kentucky could only save herself by secession.<sup>17</sup>

One Whig paper complained of great apathy among Kentucky Whigs and warned that despite the traditionally large majority in state elections "if you are not ready to see the proud Whig banner which has so long floated in triumph over our state, trailed in the dust, soiled and torn and spurned by locofoco heels, you must arouse yourselves, and go to work like men who have a great stake in [this] controversy."<sup>18</sup> The party failed to meet the challenge, and the Democrats won the two most important elections and fared far better than usual in the state legislative elections. The Whigs were able to carry only five of nine congressional districts and maintained control in the state legislature by a small majority: 20 to 18 in the Senate and 54 to 45 in the House.<sup>19</sup> Although the Whigs returned a majority of their persuasion to the control of the state government, they lost the two most prestigious positions--the governorship and the Ashland District representative. A probable reason for this was the stand the Kentucky Whig party took on slavery, which called for the limitation of its extension and the deportation of free blacks. This philosophy caused many Whigs to find themselves voting with the once radical Democratic party which was advocating a more

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<sup>17</sup>Thomas D. Clark, A History of Kentucky (New York, 1937), 439.

<sup>18</sup>Frankfort Commonwealth, June 10, 1851.

<sup>19</sup>Kirwan, Crittenden, 274.

palatable position on the issue, the maintenance of the status quo.<sup>20</sup>

The political shifting evidenced in the 1851 election was hailed by the Louisville Daily Democrat as a great victory over the Whig establishment. It was the first time since 1832 that Kentucky had elected a Democratic governor. The election of a Democrat "in the cradle of Whiggery" was considered nothing less than phenomenal.<sup>21</sup> Despite the glowing news reports, even the Democrats had to admit their victory was something less than a mandate from the people. Powell won the election by approximately 850 votes out of 100,000 cast while Breckinridge defeated Combs by only 530 votes.<sup>22</sup> For whatever the reason, by however small the majority, the Democrats had successfully ended an era. The Whig party, which had dominated Kentucky politics for a generation, never again ran a candidate for governor.

One of the first acts of the new state legislature was to elect a successor to Joseph R. Underwood, Kentucky's junior Senator, whose term would expire in March 1853. The Whigs, having a majority in the state legislature, were assured of electing their nominee. There was considerable rivalry among the Whigs as to whom they should nominate, and almost immediately they split into two camps, one favoring Crittenden, the other the Clay sponsored candidacy of Archibald Dixon. The Democrats began to

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<sup>20</sup>Shaler, Kentucky, 217.

<sup>21</sup>Louisville Daily Democrat, August 25, 1851.

<sup>22</sup>Turner, Decade of Change, 17. The gubernatorial vote was: Powell, 54,613; Dixon, 53,763; Clay, 3,621. See Appendix 2.



entertain hopes of electing one of their own party or at least holding the balance of power in the election. It soon became apparent that neither man could command the victory and, finally, a compromise candidate was selected, Crittenden's friend, Lieutenant Governor John B. Thompson. A week later Senator Henry Clay resigned, Crittenden refused to run again, and Dixon was selected to finish Clay's term. The senatorial contest showed that the Clay-Crittenden split during the 1848 presidential election had not healed. Since Kentucky was one of the strongholds of the Whig party nationally, the future looked bleak.<sup>23</sup>

With the dawning of a new year, 1852, a presidential election year, the Whig party both in Kentucky and nationally was found to be floundering aimlessly. The party was split, North and South, over the issue of slavery; it was also split over a candidate. Henry Clay, for the first time in nearly 30 years, was not actively seeking the party nomination.<sup>24</sup> Kentucky, however, was represented as John J. Crittenden was often mentioned as a possible nominee. Fillmore, who had done an adequate job as president, was not a resounding choice for renomination; there was a clamor for the war hero, General Winfield Scott, and even the party faithful, Daniel Webster. Leaders in Kentucky and other southern Whig controlled states were suspicious of Scott's stand on slavery; they insisted on a platform that

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<sup>23</sup>Kirwan, Crittenden, 279.

<sup>24</sup>Henry Clay ran for president in 1824, 1832 and 1844. He unsuccessfully tried for the Whig nomination in 1840 and 1848.

upheld the Compromise of 1850. Since Fillmore had signed and enforced the Compromise, Crittenden for one regarded his re-election as vital and worked to that end. Even Henry Clay, now retired, endorsed the candidacy of Fillmore, stating that the President "had been tried and found true, faithful, honest and conscientious."<sup>25</sup>

Many local Kentucky Whig meetings endorsed Fillmore and the Compromise. But at the state convention held in February, 1852 there was a move to nominate Crittenden. He declined, requesting that "if any purpose of that sort should be manifested in the Convention, I beg you and all my friends to suppress it."<sup>26</sup> He urged that Fillmore be nominated. At the Frankfort convention, Crittenden's letter was read, his name withdrawn and Fillmore nominated, but only after a resolution had been passed honoring Crittenden.<sup>27</sup> But all was not harmonious within the Whig party of Kentucky. Humphrey Marshall headed a faction of the party that was far more interested in their sectional rights than in the welfare of the party. They declared themselves ready to break away from the party rather than accept a northern sponsored anti-slavery candidate.<sup>28</sup> When the northern faction of the party supported Scott and refused to accept the Compromise of 1850 as

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<sup>25</sup>Henry Clay to Daniel Ullman, March 6, 1852, in Colton, Correspondence, IV, 628.

<sup>26</sup>John J. Crittenden to Orlando Brown, February 23, 1852, in Kirwan, Crittenden, 280.

<sup>27</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, February 23, 1852.

<sup>28</sup>Arthur C. Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Washington, 1914), 233.

the final solution to the slavery problem, a disruption of the party seemed inevitable at the national convention. Although Crittenden was frequently mentioned as a compromise candidate, neither side would drop its choice, and the convention was deadlocked for 53 ballots before Scott was nominated on June 21, 1852. William A. Graham of North Carolina was selected as his running mate.<sup>29</sup>

The Whigs, in Kentucky and nationally, were just beginning to regroup behind their new standard bearers when tragedy struck. On June 29, the "Great Compromiser," the patriarch of the party, Henry Clay died in Washington. The death of Clay removed the guiding spirit and one of the great bulwarks of Whiggery in Kentucky.

Telegraph dispatches from the eastern cities state that, from every steeple, the bells are proclaiming the sad intelligence that the spirit of Mr. Clay is gone; the flags of every nation are floating at half mast, many of them covered with crepe, and business is particularly suspended; both houses of congress adjourn without reading the journal.<sup>30</sup>

With the passing of Clay, followed within five months by Webster's death, the life breath went out of the Whig party. In 1852 Kentucky was one of only four states that voted for Scott and even then not by the traditionally large majority. Scott narrowly carried the state with a popular majority of only 3,000 votes.<sup>31</sup> The Whigs, slipping fast, were never able to bolster

<sup>29</sup>Joseph N. Kane, Facts about the Presidents (New York, 1964), 155.

<sup>30</sup>Lewis Collins, History of Kentucky (2 vols., Frankfort, 1966; first published 1873), I, 65.

<sup>31</sup>Shaler, Kentucky, 219. The presidential vote in Kentucky was Scott, 57,068 and Pierce, 53,806. See Appendix 3.

enough support to nominate another presidential candidate. The final confrontation between the Democrats and the Whigs in Kentucky came in the 1853 state elections. Actually the Kentucky Whigs did better than Whigs in most other areas of the country; five Whigs and five Democrats were elected to Congress; 22 Whigs and 16 Democrats were brought into the Kentucky Senate and a 55 to 45 Whig majority was maintained in the House.<sup>32</sup> After the 1853 elections, however, most Kentucky Whigs realized that their party was no longer an effective political force. Many drifted into the Democratic party while others sought alternate ways of maintaining a meaningful opposition.

Many former Whigs, who could not bring themselves to join the Democratic party, soon became politically active in the American or Know-Nothing party, which was formed as a movement against foreigners and Catholics. John Minor Botts of Virginia explained that with the breakup of the Whig party he had the choice of the Know-Nothings or the Good-for-Nothings he had been fighting for the last 20 years.<sup>33</sup> The formation of the Know-Nothing party in Kentucky was based on the idea that all foreigners were opposed to slavery and that the political strength of the North was derived, at least in part, from them.<sup>34</sup> The irony was

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<sup>32</sup>Collins, Kentucky, I, 67.

<sup>33</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, January 24, 1854.

<sup>34</sup>Agnes McGann, Nativism in Kentucky to 1860 (Washington, 1944), 59.

that Kentucky had very few foreigners and the native Catholic population were usually considered respected citizens.<sup>35</sup>

In the opinion of a contemporary writer, these foreigners belonged to the best class in the city. They were a considerate, assiduous, aspiring people; growing each day in the public esteem; fast becoming identified with the native-born, and influencing the community by their aesthetic tastes.<sup>36</sup>

Kentucky Whigs in 1854, overlooking the doctrinal differences, felt they had but two choices politically, do nothing or vote Know-Nothing, and many chose the latter.

On June 17, 1854, the Louisville Daily Times declared that it remained to be seen whether the Whig party in the South would abandon its organization to unite with the Americans. By early 1855 it was reported that in Kentucky the conversion was going smoothly and quickly.<sup>37</sup> After Louisville's leading Whig editor, George D. Prentice, made the move to Know-Nothingism, other influential citizens began to follow. Among these were John Barbee, mayor of Louisville, and Major E. B. Bartlett of Covington, who was elected President of both the State and National American Party Councils.<sup>38</sup> Others who made the switch included Robert J.

<sup>35</sup>Shaler, Kentucky, 219. Of Kentucky's 771,424 white and free colored population in 1850, only 31,420 were not native born. No listing was given for Roman Catholics, but there were only 48 such churches with a maximum seating capacity of 24,240. J. D. DeBow, ed., The 7th Census of the United States: 1850 (Washington, 1853), 613-36.

<sup>36</sup>Agnes McGann, "Know-Nothing Movement in Kentucky," in Rev. W. A. Stahl, ed., The Records of the American Catholic Historical Society (Philadelphia, 1939), XLIX, 301.

<sup>37</sup>Louisville Daily Times, January 12, 1855.

<sup>38</sup>Collins, Kentucky, I, 74.

Breckinridge, a preacher and frequent speaker for the party, and Leander Cox, Garrett Davis and Humphrey Marshall, all Kentucky representatives in Congress.<sup>39</sup> The Courier reported,

That among the distinguished politicians who have recently become members of that all-concerning organization generally known as the Know-Nothings, are Hon. John J. Crittenden, Hon. R. P. Letcher and Hon. C. S. Morehead of Frankfort. If such lights have deserted their old organization, we presume the Whig party in Kentucky may be considered defunct....<sup>40</sup>

In fact, "so large a portion of the Whig party has gone off into the new party that about all that is left for the Whigs to do is to endorse the Know-Nothing candidates which in all probability it will do."<sup>41</sup>

Originally the Kentucky Democrats regarded the move to Know-Nothingism as a Whig trick and accused the leaders of bargaining with the free soilers and abolitionists and deserting the true interests of the South. This was refuted in the American party platform which stated, in part,

It is hereby declared..., that Congress possesses no power, under the Constitution, to legislate upon the subject of slavery in the States where it does or may exist, or to exclude any State from admission into the Union because its Constitution does not recognize the institution of slavery as a part of its social system.<sup>42</sup>

The years 1854-1855 brought other changes to the Kentucky political horizon. The era gave birth to the new emancipationist party, the "Black Republicans." It was also a period during which the nearly defunct Whig party had to run the state. One of the

<sup>39</sup>McGann, "Know-Nothing Movement," 310-11.

<sup>40</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, February 7, 1855.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., March 10, 1855.

<sup>42</sup>Frankfort Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, July 10, 1855.

first acts of the legislature was to select John J. Crittenden as a Senator from Kentucky, effective upon the expiration of Dixon's term, March 4, 1855.

There were no state elections in 1854, but in several municipal elections, the Know-Nothings were able to nominate and elect candidates of their choice in Louisville, Lexington and Covington.<sup>43</sup> The first real test of the American strength in Kentucky, however, came in the gubernatorial election of 1855. On February 22, 1855 the American party held their state nominating convention in Louisville. This, Washington's birthday, had been the traditional date for Whig state conventions. The Know-Nothings nominated William V. Loving of Bowling Green for governor and James G. Hardy for Lieutenant Governor.<sup>44</sup> Due to illness, Loving was replaced on the ticket by Charles S. Morehead.<sup>45</sup> Prentice, editor and publisher of the Daily Journal, maintained that the Whig party was not dead and that it still was "the great conservative party of the nation." But, lacking a Whig ticket, he supported the American party over the Democrats even though "we may not agree with them in all their principles."<sup>46</sup> With the support of the Journal and after the surprising local victories, by 1855 it was claimed the Kentucky Know-Nothings had amassed a membership of 50,000.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Collins, Kentucky, I, 72.

<sup>44</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, February 27, 1855.

<sup>45</sup>Collins, Kentucky, I, 73-74.

<sup>46</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, March 20, 1855.

<sup>47</sup>Louisville Daily Times, January 9, 1855.

By the summer of 1855, Crittenden was actively campaigning for Morehead. According to the Journal, the American party was the only one the South could look to for protection of its peculiar institution and the only one from which the nation could expect peace, prosperity and maintenance of its constitutional liberties.<sup>48</sup> However, not all Kentucky Whigs were ready to forsake the old party to join the new. These men were usually referred to as the "Old Line Whigs."

An outstanding feature of the 1855 gubernatorial campaign was the absence of comment concerning slavery. Occasionally the Democrats would charge the Know-Nothings with abolitionist tendencies while the Americans were amazingly silent on the problem. This non-committal attitude evidently appealed to the voters, for in the August elections the Americans swept the state. Morehead defeated the Democrats' Beverly Clarke by 4,403 votes. Thirteen of the 20 state senators elected came from the American party as did 61 of the 100 representatives.<sup>49</sup> Some of the men carried to office by this wave of Know-Nothingism were J. P. Campbell, W. L. Underwood, Humphrey Marshall, A. K. Marshall, L. M. Cox, S. F. Swope and, at the national level, John J. Crittenden, all of whom would later work actively in the Constitutional Union party of Kentucky.<sup>50</sup> This, their first state-wide

<sup>48</sup> Louisville Daily Journal, March 20, 1855.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., September 5, 1855. The vote gave Morehead a 69,816 to 65,413 victory over Clarke. Collins, Kentucky, I, 75. See Appendix 4.

<sup>50</sup> W. Darrell Overdyke, The Know-Nothing Party in the South (Baton Rouge, 1950), 106.



election, was also the apex of Know-Nothing popularity in Kentucky. In the aftermath of the election there were serious riots in Louisville, resulting in 22 deaths and countless wounded, especially among the foreign population.<sup>51</sup> Each party immediately and vociferously blamed the other for the violence, but public opinion went against the American party and left a stigma they were never able to overcome.<sup>52</sup> The election of 1855 showed fairly convincingly that the Americans were the successors of the Whig party in Kentucky. The Americans received their greatest support in 1855 in the same counties the Whigs had dominated in 1851.

The decline of the American party was nearly as rapid as had been its meteoric rise. During the last weeks of the campaign there began to be evidences of a weakening of the Know-Nothing solidarity in Kentucky. The Louisville Daily Courier, a Whig paper which had endorsed the American party, repudiated the Know-Nothings in July 1855, less than a month before the election.

The few weeks experience since our connection with the order has convinced us that no man who has any self-respect or independence can belong to it twelve months without sacrificing both. It contains features which sooner or later must cause everyone who has a particle of manliness in his composition to revolt at the organization and leave it in disgust. It is an organization which may suit unscrupulous politicians to use for their own selfish designs, but it will drive from it all good men, and will infallibly fall from its own weakness.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Zachariah Smith, A History of Kentucky (Louisville, 1892), 588.

<sup>52</sup> Kirwan, Crittenden, 300.

<sup>53</sup> Louisville Daily Courier, July 21, 1855.

One of the prominent Kentuckians who concurred was ex-Senator Archibald Dixon, who had been a Whig, evolved into a Know-Nothing, and after the election joined the Democrats.<sup>54</sup>

Soon after the state elections the American party held its quarterly meeting in Louisville with rather meager attendance. It was decided to meet semi-annually, with the next meeting to be held in Frankfort in January, 1856.<sup>55</sup> In the January 23 meeting, despite efforts to nominate Crittenden, Garrett Davis was selected as Kentucky's candidate for the presidential nomination at the national convention.<sup>56</sup> The convention then chose delegates to attend the convention in Philadelphia: George Prentice and E. B. Bartlett, with Leander Cox and Thomas Todd as alternates.<sup>57</sup> At the national convention Davis drew only 12 votes. On the second ballot, ex-President Fillmore, who had never claimed affiliation with the American movement and who was then touring Europe, was nominated for president with A. J. Donelson of Tennessee as the vice-presidential nominee.<sup>58</sup> The party platform contained no policy statement on slavery, a fact that caused many of the Northern delegates to withdraw and join the Republican party.

As early as January 1856 the Courier was pleading, That the great mass of the Whig party of Kentucky have become identified with Know-Nothingism, is no argument against

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., October 20, 1855.

<sup>55</sup> Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman, August 25, 1855.

<sup>56</sup> McGann, Nativism, 125.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>58</sup> Kirwan, Crittenden, 304.

reorganizing the party. They were drawn into the thing by the leading Whig organs, and long before this scores upon scores of them have become disgusted with the new order. Let the old and glorious Whig flag unfurl, and there will be a perfect stampede from the proscriptive faction of Know-Nothingism.<sup>59</sup>

After the Philadelphia convention there may have been more disgust but hardly sufficient to constitute a stampede. However, on April 12, Henry Clay's birthday, many of Kentucky's "Old Line Whigs" met in Lexington, adopted a platform, and called for a national convention in Louisville on July 4 to nominate a presidential candidate.<sup>60</sup> With political rigor mortis setting in, the Whigs met, but their enthusiasm and vitality were gone. The convention adjourned after a few days without naming any candidates of their own or endorsing those of any other party, and the coffin closed on the Kentucky Whig party.<sup>61</sup>

In 1856 the new Republican party gained enough strength, primarily in the North, to be a major contender in the presidential election. They nominated John C. Fremont for president and adopted a platform with a plank opposing the extension of slavery. Through the efforts of Cassius Clay and John Fee the Republican party was able to build a small party organization in Kentucky, but it had little effect on the outcome of the election. The Kentucky Republican organization, though small, was the largest of its kind in the South. They even met for a state nominating convention at Slate Lick Springs on July 4 and drew up a state

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<sup>59</sup> Louisville Daily Courier, January 23, 1856.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., April 14, 1856.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., July 4, 1856.

electoral ticket.<sup>62</sup> However, most Kentuckians still agreed that "its [Republican party] success would be the beginning of the end of the Union of these States. The North may elect a President of the North, but not a President of the South."<sup>63</sup> After some internal problems, the Democrats gave James Buchanan their nomination over ex-President Fillmore while John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky was made the vice-presidential nominee. This obviously made the ticket appealing to Kentuckians.

There are hundreds and thousands of war-worn veterans in the Whig cause throughout the Commonwealth, who will hail the nominees with a degree of satisfaction almost amounting to enthusiasm. They will regard it as amongst the proudest acts of their lives, when they deposit their ballots for Buchanan and Breckinridge--the cherished sons of Pennsylvania and Kentucky.<sup>64</sup>

Despite the valient campaign efforts of Crittenden and others on behalf of Fillmore in Kentucky, when it came time to vote, many of the state's Know-Nothings feared a division of the anti-Republican vote could give the state electoral votes to Fremont and so voted Democratic. To the complete horror of many, this resulted in Kentucky casting its electoral votes for a Democrat for the first time since 1828 when Andrew Jackson carried the state.<sup>65</sup>

Both parties began immediately to make preparations for the state elections; the Democrats to prove their 1856 breakthrough

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<sup>62</sup>Turner, Decade of Change, 56.

<sup>63</sup>Louisville Daily Democrat, July 3, 1856.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., June 7, 1856.

<sup>65</sup>McGann, Nativism, 134. See Appendix 5.

had been no fluke, and the Americans to prove it had. On January 21, 1857, the Know-Nothings' State Council met to re-organize the party. Little was accomplished. A new state executive committee was selected and a party headquarters in Louisville designated and then the meeting adjourned.<sup>66</sup> Soon thereafter E. B. Bartlett called a national American convention to be held in Louisville in early June. The meeting convened with approximately 80 to 100 delegates from 13 states present.<sup>67</sup> This brief meeting formally adjourned after re-electing Bartlett as President, against his wishes, and passing a resolution reaffirming confidence in the 1856 national platform.

A new plan of organization was adopted.... The party in each state and territory was left to organize as it saw fit. The national officers were elected...with the power to reconvene the council if the need for it arose. On June 3, the council adjourned, and...it never met again.<sup>68</sup>

Nationally, the party had ceased to be an effective force; locally, it continued to thrive for a while. In May 1857 the Kentucky American party met, nominated a state ticket, and passed a resolution declaring that all who sympathized with their cause should be regarded as members in full standing of the party.<sup>69</sup>

Once again, the major battle would be fought in the Ashland District. The Democrats nominated James B. Clay for

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<sup>66</sup>Overdyke, Know-Nothing, 268.

<sup>67</sup>Lexington Kentucky Statesman, June 5, 1857.

<sup>68</sup>New Albany Tribune, June 4, 1857, in Carl Brand, "The History of the Know-Nothing party in Indiana," Indiana Magazine of History XVIII (Sept. 1922), 295.

<sup>69</sup>Overdyke, Know-Nothing, 269.

representative and James Garrard for state treasurer. The Americans countered with Roger Hanson and T. L. Jones, respectively. The Know-Nothing presses tried to stir the apathetic masses with some newspaper articles with dramatic beginnings like, "Give up the Ashland District and Americanism is forever rooted out here, rooted out in Kentucky and prostrated throughout the whole country," or "when Hanson goes down we all go down with him, and that by suffering him to be defeated we dig our own political graves. If the district is lost now, it will be lost forever, with but feeble hope that it will be regained."<sup>70</sup> They lost. The August 3 returns showed that Clay had defeated Hanson by 126 votes, 6,577 to 6,451, and that the Democrats had made a sweep of most of the important state positions.<sup>71</sup> Garrard was elected state treasurer by more than 12,000 votes; the Democrats elected eight members to Congress to two for the Americans; the Democrats carried 61 of the 100 lower house seats and won 13 of the 20 state Senate seats up for re-election. Due to previous majorities, the Americans narrowly maintained control of the state Senate, 20-18.<sup>72</sup> The last major American victory in Kentucky had been in the 1855 gubernatorial election and there was no longer any reason to expect any great resurgence.

Despite their victory, the years 1857-1858 were hardly ones of rejoicing for the Democrats, locally or nationally. The party was being rent asunder by sectional conflicts centering around the

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<sup>70</sup>Frankfort Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, July 22, 27, 1857.

<sup>71</sup>Turner, Decade of Change, 60.

<sup>72</sup>Collins, Kentucky, I, 78.

Dred Scott decision, the handling of the Kansas-Nebraska problem, especially the LeCompton Constitution, and the rising acceptance of popular sovereignty and the Freeport Doctrine by some segments of the party. Probably the most unified party of the time was the strictly sectional Republican party. In Kentucky, however, the Republicans had never made a really significant impact. In fact, since 1852 the Democrats had dominated the state's politics. By 1858 the conservative elements, including many of the leading financial, commercial, agricultural and professional men, were groping for a means of grasping the state reins once again. None of the principles of the American party was then considered an issue in Kentucky politics. The Know-Nothing leaders no longer advocated any of the distinctive tenets to which the secret brotherhood had once sworn fealty. They raised a new issue, one of general, indefinite opposition to the Democratic party.<sup>73</sup>

Early in 1858 the remains of the American party attempted to send Garrett Davis to the United States Senate but failed. The Democrats had control of the Kentucky legislature and were able to elect ex-Governor Powell to that position, effective March 4, 1859. It was the first time a Kentucky Democrat had held that position since 1828.<sup>74</sup> On January 27 the American State Convention was held in Louisville to nominate a candidate for Clerk of the Court of Appeals. George R. McKee got the nomination but lost the election to Democrat Rankin R. Revill by 13,000 votes.

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<sup>73</sup>Lexington Kentucky Statesman, May 28, 1858.

<sup>74</sup>Frankfort Daily Commonwealth, January 6, 1859.

The mounting disappointments of the conservatives were obvious. The Whigs had failed, the American party was suffering the same fate, and many voters just could not accept either of the extremes represented by the Republicans and Democrats. In the year 1858 many conservative Americans found themselves reevaluating their political positions. M. C. Johnson of Lexington wrote Senator Crittenden that,

this LeCompton business presents before it closes a field for a new party with a new name having the principle of truth and justice of the Old Whigs, the national principles of the Americans...in which all the Americans, all the national Democrats, all the old line Whigs and the soundest of the Republicans can unite.

He even urged that the party platform avoid any sectional issues, reject any prejudice to Roman Catholics, and express strong unionist feelings and non-intervention concerning the problem of slavery in the territories.

These with other principles of fairness and equality; uniting conservatism with a national program, could form the platform of a party that might unite all the nation, men of all parties, and check the spirit of sectionalism and disloyalty to the Union.

Johnson also suggested a name for this new group, the "National Union Party," as this would avoid all the stigmas and prejudices raised by the names Whig or American.<sup>75</sup> In another letter to Crittenden, S. S. Benson of Erle, Pennsylvania stated that "I look for the reorganization of parties within the next year...[and] with such an organization and you as our standard bearer we cannot

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<sup>75</sup>M. C. Johnson to John J. Crittenden, March 22, 1858, John J. Crittenden Letters (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; microfilm at University of Kentucky).



lose."<sup>76</sup> With this encouragement Crittenden began the tedious groundwork of founding a new party; a party that would recognize no north or south but a party constitutionally based and nationally oriented.

Accordingly, Crittenden, working with men like Nathan Sargent and John Minor Botts of Virginia, held a meeting in Washington in December, 1858. Representatives from anti-Democratic factions of 13 states met to nominate a conservative candidate for president in 1860. This organization was taken up with great enthusiasm by the leaders of several southern states, Kentucky included. It was originally considered by many an attempt to breathe life back into the defunct Whig party. Many of the Know-Nothing state organizations abandoned their name and existence and cooperated in the cause of the new "Opposition" party. In Kentucky, the Journal, in October 1858, took up the cry for a local Opposition party, "there is no good reason why there should not be a Union of the Opposition strength in Kentucky, and union is unquestionably necessary for success.... Let there be no jealousy between Americans and Old Whigs; they have a unity of interests and must have a harmony of action."<sup>77</sup> Despite a lack of enthusiasm or any great expectation of victory, the call went out for an Opposition convention to be held in Louisville in February, 1859. Typical of the feeling that winter was the letter Crittenden received from ex-Governor Letcher.

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<sup>76</sup>S. S. Benson to John J. Crittenden, March 25, 1858, in ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, October 23, 1858.

From all indications, I think, we shall have a large convention on the 22d. I must say that our friends are too low in spirits and in hopes to make an efficient and vigorous campaign. Something must be done or said at that convention to infuse new life, and courage, and confidence in our party, or we are lost.<sup>78</sup>

On February 22, 1859 approximately 2,000 delegates from 84 counties met in Mozart Hall in Louisville to organize the new Opposition party. Letcher presided over the assembly which included such leaders as Charles Morehead, George Robertson, Leslie Combs, James Harlan, James Dudley, Garrett Davis, John Barbee, Stephen Fitz-James Trabue and Blanton Duncan.<sup>79</sup> The convention nominated Joshua F. Bell for Governor and Alfred Allen for Lieutenant Governor to oppose the Democrats' candidates, Beriah Magoffin and Linn Boyd. Bell accepted the nomination reluctantly, withdrew from the race once, and later reentered. Many of the "Old Line Whigs" who had never joined the American party began to support the new Opposition ticket.<sup>80</sup> The 1859 campaign was rather dull; the gubernatorial candidates spent more time agreeing on issues than discussing them. Nevertheless, Crittenden was one of Bell's campaigners through the summer of 1859 because he believed that the fate of the state and possibly even the nation was at stake. On the major issue facing Kentucky and the nation, slavery, the Opposition party took its cue from the American party, standing neither as a pro-slavery nor an anti-slavery party. In fact, when

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<sup>78</sup>R. P. Letcher to John J. Crittenden, January 26, 1859, in Coleman, Crittenden, II, 70.

<sup>79</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, February 24, 1859.

<sup>80</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, July 2, 1859.

not actively evading the issue, the Opposition candidates claimed neutrality and committed themselves only to the "admitted Constitutional rights of the South."<sup>81</sup> The Journal, although for Bell, claimed "encouraging reports from almost every section of the State, yet there are towns and counties, and perhaps not a few, where the organization of our friends, if any at all exist, is very incomplete."<sup>82</sup> On August 1, when Kentuckians went to the polls, the Democrats were overwhelmingly victorious. They elected all eight state candidates, six of ten Congressmen and won control of both houses of the Kentucky legislature.<sup>83</sup> Magoffin defeated Bell by nearly 9,000 votes, while Boyd was victorious by better than 11,000.<sup>84</sup> The Whig-American-Opposition party was crushed. The Democrats were confident that the state was secure for the 1860 presidential election because the Opposition had received majorities in only 36 counties, all former Whig strongholds. Prentice, long a spokesman for the conservatives, resolved that Kentucky should support neither the Republicans nor the Democrats in 1860, "if we cannot effect a union, with conservative men upon a national, constitutional basis, we are in favor of nominating a candidate of our own, and supporting him at the polls."<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., July 18, 1859.

<sup>82</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, July 19, 1859.

<sup>83</sup>Kirwan, Crittenden, 341.

<sup>84</sup>Collins, Kentucky, I, 81. The gubernatorial vote showed the following Democratic victory: Magoffin, 76,187 to Bell, 67,271; and Boyd, 75,320 to Allen, 63,607. See Appendix 6.

<sup>85</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, November 16, 1859.

The year 1859 was a harsh one for the struggling Opposition party. They had not done well at any of the state elections. But the October raid upon Harper's Ferry, in one quick action, destroyed weeks of compromise. Sectionalism over slavery was once again bluntly, starkly laid before the public. The raid removed nearly all hope of uniting all factions, North and South, of the Opposition party on a single presidential candidate. Soon most men were withdrawing into their traditional Democratic or Republican shells.

When Congress reconvened in December 1859, John J. Crittenden began again to lay the foundations for a new national Union party. This "organization was to occupy the middle ground between the Democratic and Republican parties, opposing the anti-slavery passions of the one and the anti-Union tendencies of the other."<sup>86</sup> While laboring to save the Union, Crittenden received word that on December 12, the Kentucky legislature had voted to replace him as United States Senator from Kentucky with John C. Breckinridge, effective March 4, 1861.<sup>87</sup>

Undaunted, on December 19, Crittenden called a meeting of all southern opposition members and other conservative leaders in Congress. He urged them to forget old party affiliations and to rally to the Union in this, her most desperate moment. To the group of 50 leaders, Crittenden explained his views of the nation's malady, of which slavery and sectionalism were among the foremost causes, and his prescription for restoring America

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<sup>86</sup>Cole, Whig Party, 337.

<sup>87</sup>Collins, Kentucky, I, 81.

to good health. Before adjourning, these concerned citizens appointed a committee of ten to approach the nearly defunct Whig and American parties with the suggestion of uniting into one political organization whose banner and platform would be the Constitution and the preservation of the Union.<sup>88</sup> John J. Crittenden was appointed to head this committee that would attempt to bring Union out of turmoil.

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<sup>88</sup>Kirwan, Crittenden, 349.

## CHAPTER II

### CONVENTIONS

John J. Crittenden was given the responsibility of forming a National Union Party from two older parties, the Whigs and the Americans, and other conservative elements in the country. To do this he was empowered with two resolutions passed at the December 19 meeting of the national conservative leaders. It was there,

Resolved, That a Committee of Seven be appointed by the Chair, which shall be empowered to confer with the ... American Party and ... the Whig Party, and with such other persons as are favorable to the formation of a National Union Party on the basis of the Union, the Constitution and the enforcement of the laws, and to report to a subsequent meeting to be called by the Chair; and that the Chairman of this meeting shall be the chairman of said Committee,

Resolved, That it be recommended to the [American] National Committee ... to act in reference to the calling of a National Convention, to be composed of all who are willing to unite, heartily, and honestly, on the basis set forth in the above Resolution.

Crittenden appointed a committee of not six but nine men to assist him in this endeavor. They were George Biggs, New York, Jeremiah Clemens, Tennessee, C. M. Conrad, Louisiana, E. Etheridge, Tennessee, John A. Gilmer, North Carolina, J. M. Harris, Maryland, Joshua Hill, Georgia, E. R. Jewett, New York and G. R. Rockwell, North Carolina.<sup>2</sup> Crittenden asked Erastus Brooks of New York, a member of the American party, to present the above resolutions to

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<sup>1</sup>New York Express, December 22, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, December 23, 1859.

the American Executive Committee, which met in the American House in Philadelphia on December 21, 1859. Committee Chairman Jacob Broome of New York, who would soon become active in the Constitutional Union movement, recognized Brooks, who presented the two resolutions from Crittenden and then two of his own. The latter proposals called upon the American party to join the new party and send delegates to a meeting to be held on December 23 in Washington. The American Executive Committee concurred and appointed a committee of A. H. H. Stuart, Anthony Kennedy, James Bishop, Blanton Duncan, Jacob Broome and Brooks to attend the Washington meeting.<sup>3</sup> Edmond Peckin, Secretary of the American Executive Committee, notified Crittenden that within a month the Union forces in Philadelphia would be a powerful organization and that the movement already had the support of the city's only independent newspaper, the Evening Journal.<sup>4</sup> In Washington, on December 23, 1859, the first joint meeting of the American, Whig, and National Union parties met. By a joint resolution, Crittenden was appointed the chairman of the united party and empowered, with the consent of the chairmen of the older parties, to call a national nominating convention.

Crittenden was also made responsible for the issuance of an address to the American people setting forth the reasons which made the Union movement indispensable to the perpetuity of the government and for suggesting methods of electing delegates to the

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<sup>3</sup>New York Express, December 22, 1859.

<sup>4</sup>Edmond Peckin to John J. Crittenden, December 22, 1859, John J. Crittenden Papers (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress).

national convention.<sup>5</sup> Crittenden chose a committee of five to write the address: John P. Kennedy, Maryland, Chairman, Humphrey Marshall, Kentucky, William A. Graham, North Carolina, C. M. Conrad, Louisiana, and Henry Fuller, Pennsylvania.<sup>6</sup> Even at this early date in its existence, problems began to plague the Union party. For one reason and another most of the men Crittenden appointed were unable to serve, and so after a delay for illness, Kennedy, a wealthy and distinguished former Whig Congressman, wrote the address alone.<sup>7</sup>

On December 29 a second joint meeting, moderated by Crittenden, was held in Washington to discuss ways to make the Union party more general in appeal and a more effective political force than either of its predecessors. It was finally agreed that Union clubs at the local level were necessary. Each state represented was to form a state executive committee and then begin organizing the clubs. Another resolution enlarged the National Union Executive Committee by adding members until each state had the same number of members as it had delegates in Congress.<sup>8</sup> The original Committee of Ten was designated the National Union Executive Central Committee with headquarters at 375 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>New York Express, December 23, 1859.

<sup>6</sup>John B. Stabler, A History of the Constitutional Union Party (New York, 1954), 325-26.

<sup>7</sup>Kirwan, Crittenden, 350.

<sup>8</sup>New York Express, December 31, 1859.

<sup>9</sup>Stabler, Union Party, 323.



Each of Louisville's three major newspapers reported the events concerning the founding of the new party. The Daily Democrat gave a brief paragraph on the meetings and noted that Crittenden was heading the movement; the Daily Courier reported the story and added the comment that it was a political move by Crittenden to make the 1860 election a repeat of 1856; while Prentice's Daily Journal was the only one to whole heartedly support the new party.<sup>10</sup>

An early critic of the movement was Crittenden's long-time friend, Judge S. S. Nicholas of Kentucky. He felt the Republicans would win even if a third party did enter the race, that the Democrats would split at Charleston, and that the South would ultimately secede from the Union. He believed the only hope for the nation was to disband the Democratic and Republican parties, postpone the election, and amend the Constitution by instituting an elaborate system he had worked out for electing the next President.<sup>11</sup> Nicholas sent his proposed amendment to Crittenden for comment and possible use in the new movement. Crittenden forwarded it to William C. Rives of Virginia for suggestions. Both men had reservations about Nicholas' plan but generally agreed with the idea.<sup>12</sup> The plan never came to fruition.

This was not the only suggestion Crittenden received during the embryonic period of the Union party. A Mr. C. Powell of

<sup>10</sup>Louisville Daily Democrat, December 31, 1859; Louisville Daily Courier, December 31, 1859; Louisville Daily Journal, December 22, 31, 1859.

<sup>11</sup>New York Times, January 2, 1860.

<sup>12</sup>William C. Rives to John J. Crittenden, January 9, 1860, Crittenden Papers.

Greenville, South Carolina, sent Crittenden a letter on January 1, 1860 suggesting the new party be called the Washington Union Party and be based on Washington's Farewell Address and upon the spirit and letter of the Federal Constitution and that "every Patriotic and Sane Messenger of both houses of Congress be required to use their influence in the creation of such a party, which alone can in the present phrenzy [sic] of party strife save the Republic from overthrow."<sup>13</sup> During January, 1860 the official name of the party was changed, not to Washington Union, but rather from National Union to Constitutional Union. In the same letter discussing the Nicholas plan, Rives suggested the change. He explained that names and nomenclatures were important, especially in politics, and the word national in the Southern connotation meant consolidated. Therefore, for greater appeal in the South, Rives suggested the name of Constitutional or Constitutional Union party for,

there are sentiments of loyalty, honor, faith, patriotic allegiances, at once awakened in any honest mind by an appeal to the sacred name of the Constitution.... A Constitutional party, or a Constitutional Union party is precisely what the country now wants, and the grace of novelty, combining with the appropriateness of the name, would assist in conciliating to it the public favor and confidence.<sup>14</sup>

Rives was right. The turmoil and turbulence of the times had many seeking a refuge between the extremes presented by the Republicans and Democrats. The new party found a fertile field for growth and development in Kentucky. For in Kentucky the Whigs

<sup>13</sup>C. Powell to John J. Crittenden, January 1, 1860, ibid.

<sup>14</sup>William C. Rives to John J. Crittenden, January 9, 1860, ibid.

were still numerous, were looking for a way to regain control of the state, and were accustomed to changing names periodically. The members of the old Whig and American organizations in Kentucky rather quickly became the nucleus of the new Constitutional Union party in Kentucky.

On December 26, 1859, the first Union meeting in Kentucky was held in Fleming County. Many of the people of that county, irrespective of party, met at the Flemingsburg Courthouse to express their fidelity and constancy to the Constitution and unwavering devotion to the Union. Joseph M. Alexander was selected to preside over the meeting with 27 vice-presidents and six secretaries. L. M. Cox headed a 14 man resolutions committee which reported back numerous pro-Union platform planks, concluding with a call to all Union loving men to rally to the new party.

We hail with gladness the recent manifestations of patriotism.... Resolved, That we respectfully request the people of every county in Kentucky, and in all other States of the Union, to hold Union meetings without distinction of party, and give utterance to their loyalty to, and love for the Constitution and the Union of the States.<sup>15</sup>

Others around the state who took up the cry included Kentucky Representative William C. Anderson who rose in Congress on December 22, 1859 and stated that the Union was the paramount consideration for him. He denounced several of the Southern Representatives who were threatening to leave the Union if William Seward, the anticipated Republican presidential nominee, were elected. Anderson said the election of no individual could constitute sufficient grounds for dissolving the Union. "I am

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<sup>15</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, January 4, 1860.

for the Union first, last and all the time." In the language of Daniel Webster, Anderson proclaimed, "Liberty and Union, one and inseparable, now and forever."<sup>16</sup> George Prentice of the Daily Journal was another who began to give vocal support to the new party. In a stirring editorial he chastised both major parties for their extreme views. He called for resistance if that became necessary, but resistance within the Union and not out of it. He urged the masses of Kentuckians to arise from their apathy, for there was a great patriotic work for them to do. The Democratic and Republican parties had to be defeated in the 1860 election and there was only one way it could be done--by the people.<sup>17</sup>

From the beginning many people, nationally as well as locally, felt the only logical presidential candidate the Union party could nominate would be John J. Crittenden, although several other men had expressed an interest in the nomination. Amos Lawrence wrote from Boston that the Massachusetts National Americans would not even consider any other candidate unless Crittenden rejected the nomination and recommended someone else for the position. Lawrence assured Crittenden that if he would openly announce he was seeking the nomination "I will promise to organize the whole State in eight weeks."<sup>18</sup> In an undated letter, received in January, 1860, P. Swope of Huntington, Pennsylvania, was just as laudatory toward Crittenden and the Union party. He

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., January 5, 1860.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., January 6, 1860.

<sup>18</sup>A. A. Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, January 1, 1860, Crittenden Papers.

said the National Union party was what Pennsylvania Whigs and Americans had been waiting for and "the ticket which...as far as Pennsylvania is concerned...would receive the largest majority ever given to Presidential candidates.... For President the Hon. J. J. Crittenden, of Kentucky. For Vice President the Hon. Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania."<sup>19</sup>

Support was just as strong locally. The Journal reported a Union meeting at Lawrenceburg in Anderson County. D. D. Wilson chaired the meeting and W. G. Montjoy served as secretary. Among several resolutions that passed unanimously were declarations that the meeting agreed with the need for a Kentucky State Union Convention in the immediate future, that the United States still possessed sufficient conservative elements to save the nation, and that Crittenden was their first choice for President of the United States.<sup>20</sup>

Many of Kentucky's former Whig and American strongholds began to take up the Union standard. On January 9 there was a large Union meeting of the "friends and lovers of the Constitution and the Union," irrespective of party, in Mason County for the citizens of Mason and adjacent counties and the citizens of Brown County, Ohio and the adjacent counties. Although the temperature was below zero, the Journal reported there had never in the history of Mason County been a meeting of such numbers and respectability and rarely had there been manifested such a patriotic love for the

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<sup>19</sup>ibid. P. Swope to John J. Crittenden, January [n.d.], 1860,

<sup>20</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, January 13, 1860.

Constitution and the Union. The Unionists denounced the secessionists, declaring the dissolution of the Union would "cure no evil, repel no aggression, right no wrong, diminish no alarm, demnify no damage, but on the contrary would prove the sum of all evils, it would bring not remedy but ruin."<sup>21</sup> The Journal proclaimed the Union party as the only national party. In Prentice's opinion, conclusive proof of this was provided by the Kentucky Democratic Convention which overwhelmingly rejected a proposal that, "Resolved, That the Democracy of Kentucky are for the Union and the Constitution intact; and declare that the Union shall and must be maintained and that Kentucky will redress her wrongs inside the Union and not out of it."<sup>22</sup>

In a Union meeting in Paducah, one of several resolutions agreed to was a statement that the Democratic party program relating to slavery "has brought the danger that now threatens the perpetuity of the Union and the best way to restore peace and harmony is to... elevate in its stead the National Conservatism..."<sup>23</sup> On January 17, the Journal reported that 20 counties had already held local meetings and appointed delegates to the annual Opposition--now Union--convention to be held at Frankfort on February 22 and predicted that others would follow suit in the immediate future. "Surely the Conservatives of Kentucky will be neither the last nor the slackest to join the mighty and magnificent phlanax [sic]. On

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., January 11, 1860.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., January 13, 1860.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., January 16, 1860.

the contrary they will be among the very first and most burning. The movement is...the step for which we have all been longing with a patriotic passion."<sup>24</sup>

The next step in the struggle for recognition was for the movement to be endorsed by the state conventions. A. H. H. Stuart of Richmond, Virginia, wrote Crittenden concerning this matter. He also inquired about the promised address to the people John P. Kennedy was authoring. He urged Crittenden to get the address out. "It is a matter of highest importance...the people want a rallying point." Stuart felt the address could serve that purpose, "the great point is to have the movement endorsed by Virginia, Kentucky and North Carolina in their conventions."<sup>25</sup> Traditionally these three states had held their Whig, American and Opposition state convention on Washington's birthday, February 22. For a variety of reasons Virginia and North Carolina temporarily postponed their conventions, leaving Kentucky to lead the nation into the Union movement.

On January 6, all the Union members of the Kentucky state legislature met in the Senate chambers. Samuel Haycraft presided and John Goodloe served as secretary for the meeting. They adopted a resolution calling upon all Union loving men in every county of Kentucky that had not yet appointed delegates to the state convention to do so immediately.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., January 17, 1860.

<sup>25</sup>A. H. H. Stuart to John J. Crittenden, January 22, 1860, Crittenden Papers.

<sup>26</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, January 8, 1860.

The same day, the Boyle County Union meeting was held in Danville. Several resolutions were adopted unanimously. The Union intact proposal, voted down by the Kentucky Democratic convention, was approved and a vote of confidence given the patriotic Union movement begun by Crittenden. Refusing to affiliate with either sectional party, the Boyle County Unionists called upon all Union men to join in the effort to restore peace and harmony through the Constitutional Union party.<sup>27</sup>

From early January until the day before the State Union Convention in February, many counties held meetings which adopted pro-Union resolutions and appointed delegates to the convention. Several recommended that Crittenden be nominated for President. Prentice assured Kentuckians that all men of conservative principles were anxious to uphold the Constitution and the Union and to curb the sectionalism that threatened the nation. This could only be done through the Union movement. He predicted numerous times that if either the Democratic or Republican party were victorious in 1860 a Civil War would be inevitable.<sup>28</sup> The Daily Democrat attempted to offset the dire picture Prentice provided, though it is doubtful the same readers perused both journals. The Democrat called Prentice a "fire eater." It explained that the Democratic, or true Union party, was for non-interference with the status quo and that "all the rest are

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., January 26, 1860.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., October 29, November 17, 1859, January 6, February 7, 1860, in Betty C. Congleton, George D. Prentice and his Editorial Policy in National Politics, 1830-1860 (Lexington, 1961), 364.



helping the disunionists, whether they intend it or not; and the editor of the Journal and his party are at the head."<sup>29</sup> The paper then urged that all true conservatives unite behind the Democratic party and preserve its national character.<sup>30</sup> It was also pointed out that this was not the first time that Prentice had charged the Democratic party with disunion--just the loudest. The charge was made every four years to aid whatever party Prentice was then backing.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the efforts of the Democrat, on January 20 George Hartley presided over the Clark County Union meeting at Winchester, Kentucky, which declared the Union party "to be the only party now existing which is national in its principles and patriotic in its objects."<sup>32</sup> On January 24 there was a Grand Union Festival in Louisville, a banquet held at the Masonic Lodge with over 700 in attendance from Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio. In one of many after dinner pro-Union speeches, Judge William Bullock of Kentucky offered a toast, "We call this a Union festival...Kentucky and Tennessee are here to renew the pledges of mutual confidence and earnest heartfelt devotion to the Union." The evening was such a success that the Ohio delegates invited the group to move en masse to Cincinnati and then on to Columbus, Ohio, which was agreed.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup>Louisville Daily Democrat, January 6, 1860.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., January 10, 1860.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., January 24, 1860.

<sup>32</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, January 30, 1860.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., January 25, 1860.

The following day, by a special train provided by the state of Ohio, the entire assemblage moved north and in Columbus a second banquet was held where again the Constitution and the Union were eulogized.<sup>34</sup>

At this time the National Executive Committee officially announced the calling of a National Union Convention on July 10, 1860 to consider supporting a candidate for president put in nomination by the other parties or to nominate a candidate of their own. While the editors of the Democrat reported the news, they also added the comment that a Union party was ill advised and in bad taste, since no one seriously thought about disunion but people were very much concerned with putting the government they had in good order.<sup>35</sup> On February 2, the New York Times printed a letter from Judge S. S. Nicholas refuting that optimism. Nicholas claimed the peril of the nation to be both great and real. He cited a statement by the Governor of Virginia that declared if a Republican were elected in 1860, disunion would follow immediately. Nicholas made note of the recent secession talk in Congress and concluded that it was foolish to assume the Southern Democratic states would not secede. He noted that the Union movements in Kentucky, Tennessee, Maryland and Delaware might cause some to pause but it would only postpone the inevitable.<sup>36</sup> The Times reported a 2,500 man Union meeting in Philadelphia on February 5. The meeting opened with the reading of a letter from Crittenden. It began, "Your good cause

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<sup>34</sup> Louisville Daily Democrat, January 27, 1860.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., February 2,3, 1860.

<sup>36</sup> New York Times, February 2, 1860.

will make you triumphant," and ended, "There is a mighty power in a good cause."<sup>37</sup> The Times praised the idealism and goodness of the Constitutional Union party but pointed out it avoided all reference to the sectional problems and had no platform save the Constitution. The Times predicted that no party could get elected without taking a stand on the major issues of the day.<sup>38</sup>

In Kentucky, February, the month of the State Union Convention, opened with Prentice urging more counties to hold Union meetings to appoint delegates to the convention. He also began to push for the formation of Union clubs, especially in Louisville.<sup>39</sup> The Journal's appeals brought some results, for between February 6 and February 18, 11 counties and five of the wards in Louisville appointed delegates to the Frankfort convention. Several of these local meetings, in Livingston, Lincoln and Ohio counties as well as the Third and Fourth wards in Louisville, specifically instructed their delegates to nominate Crittenden for president.<sup>40</sup> On the day before the convention, the Journal challenged the delegates that "the times...urgently requires the formation of a national party, whose ruling principles shall be first, submission...to the Constitution as expounded by the Supreme

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., February 6, 1860.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., February 7, 1860.

<sup>39</sup> Louisville Daily Journal, February 8, 1860.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., February 13, 16, 18, 1860.

Court...and secondly, the absolute and unconditional rejection of Disunion as a political remedy."<sup>41</sup>

The Address of the Constitutional Union party's Executive Committee to the people of the United States, which Rives had hoped would be a rallying point for the party, was finally written by Kennedy, edited by Crittenden, and officially published on February 21, 1860. It was hurried to Kentucky for the first Union state convention in time to be acted upon.<sup>42</sup> On February 22 in Frankfort the Kentucky State Union Convention commenced. The convention was called to order by L. W. Andrews and Judge Bullock was made temporary President of the meeting.<sup>43</sup> The first act of the convention was to appoint a committee to nominate permanent officers. The temporary President appointed a ten man committee to perform this task. The committee included Dr. J. M. Johnson, Chairman, H. McHenry, J. W. Ritter, William Botts, W. W. Penny, W. Word, W. T. Haggin, Dr. S. F. Gano, H. Taylor and F. L. Cleveland.<sup>44</sup>

While that committee pondered their task, Colonel David S. Irvine moved that all voting in the convention be in the ratio of one vote per district for each 100 votes (or fraction over 50) cast in that district for the Opposition candidate in the last gubernatorial election. The motion was adopted overwhelmingly. At that

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., February 21, 1860.

<sup>42</sup>Stabler, Union Party, 325.

<sup>43</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, February 23, 1860.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

point Dr. Johnson reported the Committee on Permanent Officers' slate of nominees. General Leslie Combs was recommended for President. The Committee nominated one man from each district to serve as a Vice President:<sup>45</sup>

1st District--Q. Q. Quigley, McCracken  
 2nd District--James L. Johnson, Daviess  
 3rd District--George W. Ewing, Logan  
 4th District--T. T. Alexander, Adair  
 5th District--W. H. Hayes, Washington  
 6th District--W. C. Gilliss, Whitley  
 7th District--Walter C. Whittaker, Shelby  
 8th District--George W. Berry, Harrison  
 9th District--William W. Blair, Fleming  
 10th District--William I. Corrant, Kenton

Secretaries nominated were Jack Russell Hawkins, Thomas M. Green, James M. Schackleford, Theodore Kohlhas, James M. Todd, James R. Wallace, J. W. Drury, D. C. Wiekliffe and S. C. Mercer. The committee's nominees were all approved and Leslie Combs took control of the convention.<sup>46</sup> After Combs made a few opening remarks, J. M. Harlan moved that a Committee of Resolutions and Platform be appointed. Harlan entered a motion, which was unanimously accepted, that each district appoint two delegates and that Combs appoint two delegates from the state at large. Combs appointed Judge D. Breck and Alf Allen from the state at large. The districts appointed:

1st District--G. D. McGoodwin, \_\_\_\_\_ Jozes  
 2nd District--James Jackson, Henry McHenry  
 3rd District--George Ewing, John Rarer  
 4th District--William Fox (only)  
 5th District--John Draffin, T. S. Farleigh  
 6th District--Paul Anderson, A. Gilbert

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., February 24, 1860.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

7th District--T. W. Brown, J. S. Wallace  
 8th District--P. C. Wiekcliffe, John M. Harlan  
 9th District--E. W. Andrews, W. R. Wadsworth  
 10th District--F. Cleveland, R. Simmons<sup>47</sup>

At this point the recently arrived Address to the People of the United States was brought before the convention and accepted. The first part of the Address consisted of a threefold statement. The first was a justification of the new party's existence. It stated that people everywhere feared a political crisis and many for the very safety of the nation itself. The single most devisive factor in the nation was declared to be slavery. "Solemnly impressed with these facts,...a number of gentlemen from different parts of the country,...recently assembled in...Washington to deliberate on means of averting dangers...." Secondly, the Address provided a statement of principles for the party: "It was the unanimous opinion of the meeting, that immediate steps should be taken to organize a Constitutional Union Party pledged to support the Union, the Constitution and the enforcement of the laws."<sup>48</sup>

The third section of the first part was a two step plan of action for organizing the new party. The most immediate need was to enlarge the membership of the party. The address claimed that many men would leave their old parties to join, as was already the case with many former Whigs and Americans. Another predicted source of support was the expected conversion to Unionism of the more

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Constitutional Union Party, Central Executive Union Committee to the People of the United States (Washington, 1860), 1-2.

conservative elements of both the Democratic and Republican parties. However, the greatest anticipated source of support was the as yet untapped mass of disgusted and unaffiliated American citizens who officially claimed no political party. Kennedy wrote that with the migrants from ouier parties and the mass of unaffiliated, who would rise to the present crisis, "we have elements sufficient, by their combination, to form a great party, to which additional strength will be imparted by the exalted patriotism of its principles and objects."<sup>49</sup> Kennedy wrote that neither of the two major parties could any longer be trusted with the management of the government. And the only way to keep both out of office was by the formation of a new party, a Constitutional Union party. "To this end, we propose that a Convention be immediately held in each State, which will assume the duty of embodying the whole conservative strength of each in such form as shall make it most effective."<sup>50</sup> The second part of section three was a brief discussion of the mechanics of organizing. Each state district or county needed to organize, and each state needed to hold a state convention and appoint delegates to attend the National Union Convention. Each state was authorized to send the same number of delegates to the national convention as it had representatives in both houses of Congress. The Address also suggested that party platforms had often been used as a method of deceiving the public by the major parties and that the Union movement should avoid that stigma. It stated the Unionist

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 5.

could "know of no higher and nobler aim than the restoration of peace and harmony to a divided and distracted country, and no platform more acceptable to every true patriot than the Union, the Constitution, and the enforcement of the laws."<sup>51</sup>

The second part of the Address was a statement of the six principles of action the Union party felt it should take a stand on:

1. To remove the subject of slavery from the arena of party politics....
2. To remove all obstacles from...the rendition of the fugitive slave law.
3. To cultivate and expand the resources of the country by protection to every useful pursuit and interest as is compatible with the general welfare and equitable to all.
4. To maintain peace, as far as possible, and honorable relations to all nations.
5. To guard and enforce the supremacy of the laws by an impartial and strict administration of the power granted by the Constitution.
6. To respect the rights and reverence of the Union of the States as the vital source of present peace and prosperity and the surest guarantee of future power and happiness. To teach reconciliation, fraternity, and forbearance as the great national charities by which the Union is ever to be preserved, as a foundation of perennial blessings to the people.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to Kennedy and Crittenden, the Address was signed by 28 national conservative leaders including Francis Granger, Chairman of the National Whig Executive Committee, and Jacob Broome, who held a similar position in the American party.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 7.



When the evening session of the Kentucky Union Convention began, the first order of business was the selection of state electors. Utilizing the same plan they had adopted to select the Committee on Resolutions and Platform, the President appointed two delegates for the state at large and each district appointed two members. The following men were chosen:

At large--W. H. Wadsworth, Mason and E. L. Vanwinkle, Wayne  
 1st District--E. P. Barbour, McCracken and James Schackleford, Hopkins  
 2nd District--B. L. Levill, Christian and J. B. Bruner, Breckinridge  
 3rd District--W. Sampson, Barren and J. Galladay, Logan  
 4th District--W. A. Hoskins, Clinton and M. Fogle, Casey  
 5th District--Phil Lee, Bullitt and W. B. Harrison, Marion  
 6th District--W. M. Fulkerson, Owsley and J. B. Anderson, Knox  
 7th District--W. C. Bullock, Shelby (only)  
 8th District--J. M. Harlan and T. M. Green, both Franklin  
 9th District--J. B. Huston, Clark and I. S. Denny, Montgomery  
 10th District--W. S. Rankin, Grant and J. W. Metzger, Kenton<sup>54</sup>

It was then directed that each district select a delegate and an alternate to attend the National Union Convention. When the decisions were made they were announced to the state convention.

The first named was the delegate and the second his alternate:

1st District--J. D. McGoodwin and Thomas Dukes  
 2nd District--Benjamin Berry, Christian and John Morton, Ohio  
 3rd District--R. C. Bolling, Logan and John Ritter, Barren  
 4th District--S. G. Suddith, Adair and A. H. Sneed, Boyle  
 5th District--Phil Thompson, Mercer and G. W. Forman, Nelson  
 6th District--C. F. Burnan, Madison and Dr. O. P. Hill, Garrard  
 7th District--W. F. Bullock, Louisville and W. C. Whittaker, Shelby  
 8th District--W. K. Goodloe, Woodford and S. F. Gano, Scott

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<sup>54</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, February 24, 1860.

9th District--W. R. Duncan, Clark and I. J. Miller, Greenup  
 10th District--John Figgell, Kenton and W. C. Marshall,  
 Bracken<sup>55</sup>

Between the selection of the district delegates and the four delegates at large to the National Union Convention, the Committee on Resolutions and Platform reported back its recommendations which were adopted unanimously:

Believing that neither the Republican nor the Democratic organizations are competent to the restoration of peace and harmony in a distracted country, we announce the following principles as essential to any truly conservative party.

1. The supremacy of the...Constitution...as the law of all.
2. The faithful enforcement of all the laws.
3. Observance of the council and fidelity to the principles of the Farewell Legacy of Washington....
4. No interference of any character to slavery....
5. Opposition to any Presidential candidate who will enforce or be likely to follow the proscriptive, wasteful, disorganizing and downward course which has likely characterized the Federal Administration.
6. The right of...the Territories when authorized to write a State Constitution to admit or reject by it the institution of slavery.
7. Opposition to the re-opening of the African slave trade.
8. We deny the power...of the Territories prior to... State Constitution...to impair any right which any citizen of the United States possesses.... We stand by the principles of the compromise of 1850....
9. The faithful enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law....
10. That...we will stand by, support and uphold the Union against all attacks from without and within.... We invite all fellow citizens of all party names to unite with us...in the common cause of the Constitution and the Union, and in the election of a President of ability, integrity, and patriotism, not identified with a sectional party who will be President of the whole nation....

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

Such a President we should recognize in our own...John J. Crittenden whom we recommend to the favorable consideration of a National Union Convention as worthy of that exalted position....<sup>56</sup>

After the convention had adopted their platform and candidate, Colonel Irvine moved that a committee be appointed to select nominees for the state at-large delegates to the national convention. The proposal was accepted and President Combs appointed a ten man committee to make nominations.<sup>57</sup> George Williams, Chairman of the committee, reported the recommendations for the four at-large seats: L. W. Andrews, Fleming, John M. Johnson, McCracken, Charles S. Morehead, Louisville and Leslie Combs, Fayette. The nominees were accepted unanimously.<sup>58</sup>

G. W. Brown of Shelby County then introduced a resolution that put the Kentucky Union Convention unanimously on record as abhorring the John Brown raid in Virginia. L. W. Andrews entered a proposal allowing the state central committee, which was to be appointed by President Combs at some future date, the authority to fill any vacancies in the list of Kentucky electors, assistant electors, national convention delegates and alternates. This suggestion also passed unanimously. S. L. Williams of Montgomery County then offered for consideration the resolution the Kentucky Democratic Convention had rejected. It passed unanimously. The Kentucky Union Convention, "Resolved, That the people of Kentucky are for the Union and the Constitution, intact: and declare that the

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

Union shall and must be maintained and that Kentucky will redress her wrongs inside of the Union and not out of it."<sup>59</sup> Finally, Colonel W. C. Gilliss of Whitley County gained unanimous support for his suggestion that at the first possible date each county establish a central executive Union committee and run candidates in every election at every level. After a brief concluding address, Leslie Combs adjourned the Kentucky Union Convention.<sup>60</sup>

The Louisville Daily Journal immediately endorsed the platform and the nomination. As expected, the Daily Democrat took a less favorable view of the work of the Union Convention. It denounced the Union platform as the pronouncement of a series of truisms. The Democrat ridiculed the platform as allowing power already held and denying authority already conceded.<sup>61</sup> A major drawback to the Convention report was that Crittenden had already announced that he would not seek the nomination. In the summer of 1859 his daughter had urged him not to run for President and he replied that she had never given him "wiser or nobler advice."<sup>62</sup> Crittenden remained firm in his decision right through the National Union Convention. In a letter to Washington Hunton of New York, Crittenden flatly stated that he was tired of the life he was leading and felt impatient for the end of his senatorial term. "I am tired of public life.... I presume I

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Louisville Daily Democrat, February 24, 1860.

<sup>62</sup> John J. Crittenden to Mary Ann Crittenden, July 2, 1859, in Coleman, Crittenden, II, 178.

could obtain the nomination of the Union party for the Presidency, but I don't desire it, and have all along and repeatedly declined, and warned my friends that I did not wish to be considered a candidate."<sup>63</sup> A week before the national convention the Frankfort Commonwealth reported that Crittenden had ended all speculation concerning his possible candidacy. At a dinner in Alexandria, Virginia on April 12, Crittenden was toasted as the next President of the United States. He replied that he had served his time in public office and it was time for him to retire. He had not sought the nomination and would not accept it. He wanted only the preservation for the Union and his own personal retirement.<sup>64</sup>

Shortly after the Kentucky Union Convention, R. P. Letcher wrote Crittenden that there were elements in the state who opposed running a Union candidate for President. However, Letcher felt that unless the Union party ran a candidate they would be absorbed into the Democratic party, at least in Kentucky.<sup>65</sup> In early March the Journal announced the place and date for the National Union Convention had been changed to Baltimore, Maryland, and May 9, 1860.<sup>66</sup> The convention had been tentatively scheduled for mid-July. However, when the Republican party moved their convention from mid-June to mid-May, the National Union Executive

<sup>63</sup>John J. Crittenden to Washington Hunton, April 15, 1860, ibid., 192.

<sup>64</sup>Frankfort Commonwealth, May 2, 1860.

<sup>65</sup>R. P. Letcher to John J. Crittenden, March 1, 1860, Crittenden Papers.

<sup>66</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, March 9, 1860.

Committee altered the date for the Union convention. If they met before the Republicans and nominated a conservative candidate, perhaps the Republicans would endorse the same man at their convention or at least select a more conservative candidate than William Seward.<sup>67</sup> Amos Lawrence reported to Crittenden that it was rumored around Washington that if the Constitutional Union party would nominate Judge John McLean, the Republicans would second his candidacy at their convention.<sup>68</sup>

After Crittenden eliminated himself the field was wide open for the Union nomination and several men actively sought that honor. One was Judge McLean. Another pursuer of glory was General Winfield Scott. He had little backing in either of the major parties and so attempted to capture the Union nomination. Scott wrote Crittenden requesting support for his nomination.<sup>69</sup> While no record of a direct response remains, Crittenden must have previously mentioned the possibility to Amos Lawrence because Lawrence wrote Crittenden that Massachusetts was not interested in Scott, unless Crittenden rejected the nomination and then openly recommended Scott to them.<sup>70</sup> Many of the Southern conservatives considered Sam Houston as a possible nominee,

<sup>67</sup> New York Express, April 12, 1860.

<sup>68</sup> A. A. Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, April 22, 1860, Crittenden Papers.

<sup>69</sup> Winfield Scott to John J. Crittenden, January 6, 27, 1860, in Coleman, Crittenden, II, 182, 184.

<sup>70</sup> A. A. Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, January 1, 1860, Crittenden Papers.

although most of the Northerners were against the idea.<sup>71</sup> Edward Bates of Missouri drew strong early support for the nomination but as he began actively working toward heading a combined Union and Republican ticket, both parties lost interest in him. There were several favorite sons mentioned but the two strongest contenders for the nomination were John Bell of Tennessee and Edward Everett of Massachusetts. As the date for the National Union Convention approached, nearly everyone agreed Crittenden could have the nomination for the asking, but without him in the running John Bell was probably the favorite. It was generally conceded the Union party would nominate a Southern conservative since the party strength lay in the South, especially through the border slave states.<sup>72</sup>

Before the Kentucky Unionists could devote their full energies to the National Union Convention, there were municipal elections in several cities held in April, 1860. In Louisville there were elections to the Board of Aldermen, the City Council and the Board of School Trustees. The Daily Journal urged the Unionists of Kentucky to remember their convention pledge to run candidates in every election. "Our municipal election...demands from our citizens loyalty to party and fidelity to the interests of the city. Most fortunately these duties can be combined by voting the Opposition ticket."<sup>73</sup> Each of Louisville's eight

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<sup>71</sup>Charles F. Richardson, "The Constitutional Union Party of 1860," The Yale Review, III, Old Series (Aug. 1894), 154.

<sup>72</sup>New York Express, May 1, 1860.

<sup>73</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, April 5, 1860.

wards nominated a full slate of Union candidates. When the final results of the April 7 elections were announced, the Union candidates had done very well.<sup>74</sup> Including Opposition holdovers from previous elections, the new breakdown of city officials showed five Union-Opposition members on the eight man Board of Aldermen, nine on the 16 member City Council and seven Union-Opposition members on the 16 man Board of School Trustees.<sup>75</sup> Municipal elections in other parts of the state were not as successful for the Unionists as in Louisville, but they did show a rising Union strength across the state.

Also during April, 1860, there was another event which heartened Unionists in Kentucky and across the nation. On April 23, the Democratic National Convention convened in Charleston, South Carolina. Almost from the start there were problems. The delegates could not agree on a platform or a candidate; part of the delegates walked out of the convention; and on May 3, after ten days of discord, the convention recessed without having accomplished anything. The split in the Democratic Convention convinced many Unionists they could not only nominate a candidate but also elect the next President. The Journal predicted, "The Democratic party is gone. It is a tale that is told.... And now the question is--which shall prevail in the United States, the National Union Party or the Republican Party?"<sup>76</sup> The New York Times

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., April 9, 1860.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., June 26, 1860.



speculated that with the split in the Democratic party no candidate would get a majority of the votes, thus throwing the election into the House of Representatives. The Times predicted the outcome of the election would show 15 states going Republican, 14 Democratic, two Constitutional Union and two (Kentucky and North Carolina) would tie.<sup>77</sup> The New York Express felt the Democratic split enhanced Sam Houston's chances of getting the Union nomination because he could appeal to both factions of the Democratic party and might draw votes from each to the Union movement. It was even mentioned that each major party might endorse the Union candidate to keep the other from winning. At worst the election would go to the House of Representatives where the only logical compromise candidate would be the Union candidate.<sup>78</sup>

With glowing predictions of success all about them, the delegates began arriving in Baltimore for their national convention. The convention began on May 9 at the Front Street Theater on the corner of Fayette and North Streets. The convention site was a former church owned by the federal government. The Union Committee of Arrangements got permission to use it from the Secretary of the Interior.<sup>79</sup> Most of the delegates stayed at the Barnum Hotel or the Eutaw House. John Bell was registered at the

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<sup>77</sup>New York Times, May 2, 1860.

<sup>78</sup>New York Express, May 8, 9, 1860.

<sup>79</sup>Murat Halstead, William A. Hesseltine, ed., Three Against Lincoln (Baton Rouge, 1960; first published 1860), 122.

latter while Crittenden was a house guest of John P. Kennedy during the convention.<sup>80</sup>

A preliminary meeting of the National Union Committee and the National Union Executive Central Committee was held at 10:00 A.M., May 9, at the Temperance Temple. Also invited to attend were the Whig and American National Committees. The National Union Committee was composed of all the state Union Executive Committees, while the National Executive Committee was the group of ten men led by Crittenden who had run the party since the December, 1859 meetings. Only two of 21 members of the Whig committee were present, and six of 13 members from the American committee participated.<sup>81</sup> The four committees were called to order by Crittenden who reported that the National Executive Committee had completed its role of being a nucleus for the new party. Their goal had been

to rally the conservative elements throughout the country into a party whose objects should be the preservation of the institutions of the country; to turn back the waves of faction and section and still the threatenings, which, if not arrested, will bring calamity upon the country.<sup>82</sup>

This he felt had been accomplished with the meeting of a Union convention. Erastus Brooks suggested the convention open with Crittenden nominating a temporary President. Crittenden expressed doubt that he had the authority to do so, but agreed that he would if the Committees present felt he should. They did, unanimously. After some discussion concerning the necessity for further meetings

<sup>80</sup> Baltimore Clipper, May 8, 1860.

<sup>81</sup> Washington National Intelligencer, May 10, 1860.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

and when they should occur, it was proposed and accepted that the joint Committee meet one hour before each morning session at the Temperance Temple.<sup>83</sup>

Before 11:00 A.M. on the first day of the convention all available seats were filled except those reserved for convention officials and the state delegations. The patriotic theme was plainly evident around the hall. The balconies were covered with red, white and blue draperies, while the south wall was covered with an assortment of star spangled banners. Over the speakers' platform was a full length picture of George Washington, a portrait of an American eagle, and on either side of the president of the convention's chair, a large American flag.<sup>84</sup>

A few minutes before noon John J. Crittenden entered the hall, his arrival greeted by tumultuous applause. He shook hands with each member of the Kentucky delegation and then moved to the platform. After a loud burst of applause, someone called for three cheers for John J. Crittenden. Three more were called for and given and then three more. Cheering was loud and wild, hats and handkerchiefs were waved, and Crittenden bowed until he was tired.<sup>85</sup> After order was restored, Crittenden convened the convention and introduced Reverend James McCabe of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church who gave the invocation. Crittenden then said, "It has been made my duty...as chairman of the Executive Committee...to perform the

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., May 11, 1860.

<sup>84</sup> Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 122.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

honored task of calling this Convention to order...." He then suggested the first order of business be the appointment of a temporary President and nominated Washington Hunt, the former Governor of New York, for the position.<sup>86</sup> Hunt was unanimously selected. His opening address was a rambling pro-Union speech that reminisced about the founding fathers and the nation they established based on liberty, union and independence.<sup>87</sup>

After Hunt's speech, Thomas Swann of Maryland nominated William F. Switzer of Missouri for temporary Secretary. He was elected. Leslie Combs of Kentucky then moved that a Committee of Organization be selected to nominate permanent officers to the convention. He suggested that each state delegation select one representative from their own ranks to serve on the Committee. This plan passed unanimously. At this point the Chair suggested a recess, after which the name of each state's representative would be given to the temporary Secretary. Several motions for adjournment were defeated, so each state immediately selected its representative to the Committee of Organization and submitted the name to Switzer. Kentucky's representative was John Finnell of Kenton County. That accomplished, a motion was finally made and carried to recess until 4:00 P.M.<sup>88</sup>

When Hunt reconvened the convention the crowd of visitors was even greater than at the noon session and many, unable to get

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Washington National Intelligencer, May 11, 1860.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

in, stood outside. The first act of the afternoon session was the reading of the report of the Committee of Organization by A. J. Donelson of Tennessee. The Committee nominated Hunt for permanent President. They recommended 22 men for Vice Presidents, including David A. Sayer from Kentucky, and 12 Secretaries, including Samuel Davis from Kentucky. As each name was read the convention<sup>89</sup> applauded loudly and all nominees were unanimously accepted. After taking charge of the convention as permanent President, Hunt made another lengthy pro-Union speech. At the end of Hunt's speech a motion was made to begin nominating candidates. Edward Shippen of Pennsylvania offered a unique method for doing this. He suggested that each state nominate one man for President and one for Vice President. Then the balloting would begin. The man with the fewest votes on each ballot would be eliminated. This procedure would be repeated until there was only one man left for each office. No action was taken on this proposal.<sup>90</sup> Another Pennsylvania delegate, F. W. Grayson, protested that,

I came with the expectation that we had an infinitely more important work to do than to nominate a candidate for the Presidency...we are about to initiate a great conservative national party. (Applause) And, sir, whether we are successful today, or next year or in the next quarter of a century, I for one wish that it be understood that when this party of ours shall triumph, it shall triumph not upon men but upon principles. (Applause).<sup>91</sup>

Thomas A. Harris of Missouri moved that balloting be delayed as there were still some delegates who had not yet arrived. J. W. C.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

Watson of Mississippi moved that nominations and balloting begin at 10:00 A.M. the following morning, May 10.<sup>92</sup>

Amid the turmoil of whether the convention should adopt a platform or nominate candidates and when the balloting should begin, Leslie Combs helped reunite the convention with a humorous speech on the importance of platforms to great political parties.<sup>93</sup> He satirized the existing political situation with comments like, "one [platform] for the harmonious Democracy who have lately agreed together so beautifully at Charleston." He suggested a two plank platform for them, one plank excluding slavery from the territories and the other forcing it into the territories, with both planks being adopted unanimously. For "the irrepressible conflictists," as Combs referred to the Republican party, he also had a two plank platform. The "first in reference to the right of a man to kiss his wife on Sunday and the second, in reference to the burning of witches...." The Unionist platform, however, required only one plank, "the Constitution of the United States as it is...now and forever."<sup>94</sup> After Combs' speech, Switzer said that a platform could be misconstrued and he hoped the convention would not peril the success of the movement with any platform but take the Constitution and the Union and with that go before the country. Swann of Maryland seconded the motion but the chairman of the Georgia delegation reported that his delegation was instructed to

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Stabler, Union Party, 450.

<sup>94</sup>Washington National Intelligencer, May 11, 1860.

demand a platform. Erastus Brooks said all 70 of the New York delegates and alternates asked the convention to take as its platform the Constitution, the Union, and the enforcement of the laws.<sup>95</sup>

W. L. Goggin of Virginia interrupted the debate to suggest that John J. Crittenden be given a seat of honor on the platform. The motion passed unanimously, but Crittenden was not then in the hall. Little of a constructive nature was being accomplished, so Brooks moved a Committee of Business be established with one delegate from each state to decide an order of business for the next day's session. The proposal was accepted and the committee was established with each state announcing its representative during a roll call. President Hunt announced the Committee would meet at 8:00 P.M. at the Erastus House. The convention then adjourned for the night.<sup>96</sup> The Baltimore Clipper reported that 450 delegates and alternates had attended the first day of the Union convention, plus a large number of visitors.<sup>97</sup>

The Convention's second day was called to order at 10:00 A.M. by Washington Hunt. The invocation was given by the Reverend Dr. John McCron of Monument St. Lutheran Church. Erastus Brooks, Chairman of the Committee on Business, announced that Joseph Ingersoll of Pennsylvania would read the committee report. Ingersoll prefaced the report by saying it had passed unanimously in committee.

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Baltimore Clipper, May 10, 1860.

Whereas experience has demonstrated that platforms... have had the effect to mislead and deceive the people, at the same time to widen the political divisions of the country...it is both the part of patriotism and of duty to recognize no political principle other than the Constitution of the country, the Union of the States, and the enforcement of the laws and that as Constitutional Union men of the country in national convention assembled we hereby pledge ourselves to maintain, protect and defend...these great principles of public liberty, and national safety against all enemies, at home or abroad.<sup>98</sup>

The report also suggested a method of voting and recommended that a Presidential nominee be selected and then the Vice Presidential nominee. The preamble was accepted by acclamation but there was considerable discussion on the resolution governing voting. It was ultimately amended to allow each individual delegate the right to his separate vote rather than voting by states.

Having resolved that problem, it was decided unanimously to begin taking nominations for President. By the time nominations began the favor of the convention was split between John Bell and Sam Houston with Edward Everett as a possible darkhorse. However, several states were committed to favorite sons on the first ballot and it was not anticipated that anyone would win on the initial ballot. On the first roll call ten men received votes, with Bell and Houston leading the way with 68 1/2 and 57, respectively. Crittenden finished a distant third with 28 votes, followed by Edward Everett, William A. Graham of North Carolina and Judge John McLean of Indiana. Four other men received 13 or fewer votes.<sup>99</sup> At the end of the first ballot 254 votes had been cast, of which 128

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<sup>98</sup> Washington National Intelligencer, May 11, 1860.

<sup>99</sup> A. K. McClure, Our Presidents and How We Make Them (New York, 1900), 173. The complete first ballot is recorded in Appendix 7.



were needed to win the Union nomination. Bell not only had garnered the largest single vote, but his votes were also the most geographically spread across the nation.<sup>100</sup> On the first ballot Kentucky's delegates cast all 12 of their votes for Crittenden, following the state convention's instructions.<sup>101</sup>

On the second ballot the move was to Bell. Alabama switched her nine votes from Everett to Bell, Indiana switched from McLean to Bell, and Massachusetts forsook her favorite son in favor of Bell. Finally, as the roll call got to the last state, the chairman of that delegation announced that Virginia cast 13 votes for Bell and two for J. M. Botts of Virginia. Virginia's votes gave Bell 139 and the Union nomination for President. On the second ballot the Kentucky delegates cast six votes for Houston, four for Bell, one-and-a-half for Everett and one-half vote for William Sharkey of Mississippi.<sup>102</sup> After Virginia's vote many states, including Kentucky, changed their votes to Bell. When all the changes were recorded, President Hunt announced, "Gentlemen of the Convention, I rise to discharge the proudest duty of my life.... I now declare that John Bell of Tennessee, by the unanimous vote of this Convention, is the candidate of the Constitutional Union Party of the United States for the

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<sup>100</sup>Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 132.

<sup>101</sup>Richard P. Hedlund, Kentucky and the Presidential Election of 1860 (Lexington, 1960), 52.

<sup>102</sup>Washington National Intelligencer, May 12, 1860. The complete second ballot is recorded in Appendix 8.

Presidency."<sup>103</sup> After several pro-Union speeches, including one by Tennessee's "Eagle Orator," Gustavus Henry, the grandson of Patrick Henry, the convention adjourned until 5:00 P.M. when Vice Presidential nominations were to begin.<sup>104</sup>

When the convention reopened Leslie Combs immediately got the floor and eulogized Crittenden. When he was through, Switzer of Missouri asked if nominations were in order and when the Chair assured him they were, he nominated Edward Everett of Massachusetts for Vice President. Gustavus Henry moved it be made unanimous but John Finnell of Kentucky nominated Washington Hunt who declined. After most of the states had seconded the Everett nomination, Combs said he had never heard if Everett would accept the nomination. The chairman of the Massachusetts delegation responded that he was not authorized to commit Everett but "I can say...that if my illustrious friend had been here and beheld your bright faces, heard the voices, and felt the enthusiasm which prevades this convention at the mention of his name, he must...accept the nomination."<sup>105</sup> Everett was then proclaimed the Vice Presidential nominee by acclamation. Ex-Governor Neil Brown of Tennessee then made a pro-Bell and Everett speech, concluding, "A better ticket... could not have been chosen to insure the safety of the Union and a prompt execution of the laws. We stand upon the Constitution

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>Joseph Parks, John Bell (Baton Rouge, 1950), 354.

<sup>105</sup>Washington National Intelligencer, May 12, 1860.

and the Union, prepared to defend them...."<sup>106</sup> Finally, before adjourning, the convention agreed to replace the Crittenden led National Union Executive Central Committee with a 14 member National Central Executive Union Committee, which included Kentuckian Robert Mallory.<sup>107</sup> After a brief concluding address by Washington Hunt, the convention adjourned.

The reaction to the convention, the platform and the ticket varied in Kentucky, as well as in the nation. The vagueness of the Union platform was both a strength and a weakness. It allowed men to hold almost any belief and be in the party but failed to be exciting enough to gain new converts.<sup>108</sup> The Kentucky Statesman declared the platform faced no issues and the ticket was "decidedly slow, Bell and Everett are worn out politicians--old fogies, without sympathy with the progressive spirit of the age."<sup>109</sup> The Kentucky Yeoman was the most critical when it claimed the whole Union movement was a bunch of "humbug to be forgotten in six weeks."<sup>110</sup> Prentice in the Daily Journal approved the ticket and wrote "perhaps the most obvious feature of the Union Presidential ticket is its inherent strength and excellence...the rare political abilities and culture and the high unsullied character of its

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Stabler, Union Party, 469.

<sup>108</sup>Hedlund, Election of 1860, 51.

<sup>109</sup>Lexington Kentucky Statesman, May 15, 1860.

<sup>110</sup>Frankfort Kentucky Yeoman, May 12, 1860.

members...its undoubted and personal fitness."<sup>111</sup> Regardless of other people's opinions of their ticket, Unionists in Kentucky and across the nation were satisfied and began immediately organizing for the campaign and the fall election.

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<sup>111</sup> Louisville Daily Journal, May 12, 1860.

### CHAPTER III

#### CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS, 1860

Kentucky was prominently and actively involved in the campaign and election of 1860. Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, the Northern Democratic candidate for president, was the only one of the four nominees who had no strong political ties in Kentucky. Abraham Lincoln, the Republican standard bearer, was a native of the state. At the first and united Democratic convention at Charleston, South Carolina, two Kentuckians, James Guthrie and John C. Breckinridge, received strong support as possible presidential nominees. When the convention split, the Southern Democrats moved to Richmond, Virginia and made Breckinridge their candidate for president. The Constitutional Union Party was founded primarily by the effort of Kentuckian John J. Crittenden. Until the national convention, Crittenden had been the party. He called the meeting to found the movement; many of his ideas were incorporated in the early doctrines of the party; he served as the first party chairman and chairman of the party's Executive Committee; he was responsible for much of the publicity the party got; and he worked on the arrangements for the Union convention. The Union candidate, John Bell of Tennessee, was also known to most Kentuckians. Crittenden, through his prestige and persuasiveness, drew conservatives from myriad backgrounds into

the new Union movement. In Kentucky, one of these converts was George D. Prentice who utilized his powerful Louisville Daily Journal for the Union cause in the 1860 presidential election.

Prentice wrote concerning the Union candidates that "never in the later years of the Republic has a Presidential ticket been presented to the country in relation to which special remark was less necessary." He felt that just to utter the names Bell and Everett was to pronounce their fitness for the positions they sought.<sup>1</sup> Bell, who had attended the Union convention, left Baltimore immediately after the second ballot for President had been completed. He went to Philadelphia, where he officially received word of his nomination in a letter from Washington Hunt.<sup>2</sup> In a private communication to Hunt, Bell accepted the nomination but said he was going to postpone his public announcement of acceptance until he returned to his home in Nashville.<sup>3</sup> The Unionists of Philadelphia were thrilled that Bell was in their city, and on May 11 approximately 6,000 of them participated in a Union parade that ended at the La Pierre House where Bell was staying. The crowd began to call for Bell to come out and speak to them. Finally Bell and Joseph Ingersoll came to a balcony and gave brief addresses.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, May 12, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>Washington Hunt to John Bell, May 11, 1860, in ibid., May 17, 1860.

<sup>3</sup>Washington National Intelligencer, May 23, 1860.

<sup>4</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, May 17, 1860.

The May 16 Journal announced that Bell was returning from Philadelphia to Nashville by train and would stop in Louisville for a day. Prentice urged his readers to give Bell a hearty welcome. When Bell arrived on the night of May 17, the Louisville Unionists gave him a good welcome and later serenaded him at his hotel. Before retiring for the night, Bell made a brief, well received speech which was followed by a lengthy pro-Union speech by ex-Governor Charles S. Morehead.<sup>5</sup> Bell said that the majority of both major parties were loyal to the Union but were following leaders who were only interested in their own personal futures. He declared the object of the Union party was to inform conservatives of the nation's peril so they would stop supporting the disunionists on both sides and help crush sectionalism. He claimed that if domestic problems continued unimpeded that within a decade the United States would be involved in a civil war, followed by anarchy. Bell felt the Union party could save the nation if the masses of the people would rally to it.<sup>6</sup>

Approval for the candidate was not limited to the two cities that had greeted him. The Journal daily printed letters from people praising Bell and Everett. Typical of these was the first of a series of letters the Journal printed from Washington and signed only with the initial B.

From all quarters congratulations are pouring in to the Union Committee on the character and candidates of the Union Constitutional Convention.... We are the People's party....

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., May 18, 1860.

<sup>6</sup>New York Times, May 25, 1860.

This is our mission! And a more requisite, a purer, a more practical, a more elevating, a more patriotic mission has never yet enlisted men.<sup>7</sup>

The New York Times ran a quick survey on the popularity of the Union ticket in the South. The report predicted the Unionists would carry the former Whig states Kentucky, Tennessee, Maryland and Delaware for sure and do well in Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Louisiana, Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia.<sup>8</sup>

When Bell arrived in Nashville he was greeted by a great crowd including most of the important state and local officials.<sup>9</sup> Ex-Governor Neil S. Brown declared Bell's nomination "the first time since the days of Washington" that any presidential candidate "had been brought out by a spontaneous movement of the people; who valued their country above the behests of party."<sup>10</sup> Bell then announced his acceptance of the Union nomination.<sup>11</sup>

Things were considerably more muddled concerning the Union vice presidential nomination. Edward Everett was uncertain whether he wanted the nomination. Crittenden was one of several Union leaders who signed a letter to Everett urging him not to decline. They said the Union party had a good chance of-winning the 1860 election, but, if Everett declined, he would greatly impair, if not destroy, that chance of victory. The signers therefore

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<sup>7</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, May 19, 1860.

<sup>8</sup>New York Times, May 22, 1860.

<sup>9</sup>Nashville Banner, May 19, 1860.

<sup>10</sup>Parks, Bell, 359.

<sup>11</sup>Nashville Banner, May 21, 1860.



appealed to Everett's loyalty and patriotism to prevent such an embarrassing, if not fatal, action.<sup>12</sup> The letter irritated Everett who felt he was being pressured into the nomination. When word of this reaction reached Crittenden, he immediately wrote Everett a note of apology. He explained the signers had meant no offense and that it was their great desire to see Everett on the Union ticket that had motivated the letter. Crittenden made it clear to Everett that he was under no obligation to accept the nomination.<sup>13</sup> Everett ultimately accepted, but even in his acceptance speech he proved his heart was not in the election. Everett explained that he felt his work touring around the nation eulogizing George Washington and raising money for the purchase of Mount Vernon would do more good toward binding the nation together than a "wretched scramble for office." Therefore he accepted the nomination but refused to participate actively in the campaign.<sup>14</sup>

There were few new issues debated in the 1860 election, merely a rehash of the problems and politics of the 1850's. The Democratic and Republican speakers spent as much time defending their parties' position on the Compromise of 1850 as they did discussing the election of 1860. The actual candidates said little, preferring to send out speakers on their behalf. Only Douglas did any extensive personal campaigning for the Presidency. A problem common to the three anti-Lincoln candidates was establishing

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<sup>12</sup>Stabler, Union Party, 486-87.

<sup>13</sup>John J. Crittenden to Edward Everett, May 30, 1860, in Coleman, Crittenden, II, 208-209.

<sup>14</sup>Washington National Intelligencer, June 4, 1860.

a priority of whom they opposed most.<sup>15</sup> The two factions of the Democratic party spent more time blaming the other for their internal split than they did trying to defeat Lincoln, while the Union campaign theme was that neither Democratic faction could carry the election and they should both unite behind Bell. Meanwhile, Lincoln's campaigners intimated anything they felt might get him elected. Salmon P. Chase, for instance, in speeches in Kentucky and Ohio hinted that if the Republicans were elected they might accept slavery in the territories.<sup>16</sup>

In Kentucky the campaign was just as confusing as elsewhere. Each of Louisville's three major newspapers backed the candidacy of a different one of the anti-Lincoln nominees. The Courier supported Breckinridge, the Democrat promoted Douglas, and the Journal favored Bell.<sup>17</sup> For the duration of the campaign there was bickering among the papers, especially between the Courier and the Journal. For instance in reply to a Courier article demanding the election of Breckinridge, the Journal countered that "the Union must be preferred to any favorite son of our State, no matter what the consequences may be...."<sup>18</sup>

While the campaign contained no new issues, it was an interesting one to follow for each party had a campaign song,

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<sup>15</sup>Hedlund, Election of 1860, 63-64.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ollinger Crenshaw, The Slave States in the Presidential Election of 1860 (Gloucester, Mass., 1969; first published 1945), 158.

<sup>18</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, August 31, 1860.

slogan or gimmick. Some of the more publicized gimmicks were Douglas' Little Giants, Lincoln's Rail Splitters and Bell's Bell Ringers. In Kentucky the Bell Ringers were used with terrific impact at public meetings or mass Union rallies. Men and boys, both black and white, instead of cheering rang cow, tea, dinner and even locomotive bells to show their approval of points made favoring their candidates.<sup>19</sup> Another frequent technique used by the Democrats and Unionists, especially in Kentucky, was the resurrection of Henry Clay. Each group and its supporting newspaper attempted to present excerpts of Clay speeches proving he would have supported their party. The Union argument was the most convincing since the majority of Kentucky's former Whigs, Clay's party, were now members of the Union movement. The Unionists often quoted an 1850 Clay speech in which, they claimed, he predicted their party and said he would have joined it. Clay, speaking on the divisions in the country, had said, "it will lead to the formation of two new parties, one for the Union, and one against the Union." He said the first new party would stand for "the Union, the Constitution, and the enforcement of the laws," and that he would be in that party no matter who else was in it or against it.<sup>20</sup> Another campaign tactic was to have speakers from each of the anti-Lincoln parties meet in a joint rally. Each speaker had one and a half hours to deliver his

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<sup>19</sup>Parks, Bell, 367.

<sup>20</sup>Frankfort Commonwealth, September 21, 1860.

initial address and a brief rebuttal period at the end.<sup>21</sup> Often attendance was low at the political rallies, especially in rural areas, even for the joint meetings. One Union speaker, John Tuttle, regarding a speech he made, said the attendance was low at the start but by noon it had swelled to as many as 50 or 60.<sup>22</sup> The prominent spokesmen for each party were invited to far more function than they could possibly attend. All three Louisville papers carried periodic letters from irate citizens who had attended political rallies expecting to hear a well known representative of the candidate only to have some local official speak.

Another Union gimmick often used in conjunction with or as reason for a rally was the erecting of a Bell and Everett or Union pole. It soon became almost a contest among the local committees to see who could erect the tallest Union pole. At a rally in Newport, John Finnell spoke, but the highlight of the program was the implacement of an 80 foot tall Union pole, that was to remind all who saw it to vote for Bell and Everett.<sup>23</sup> A week later at a Union rally in Middletown, where B. H. Helm and Lovell Rouseau spoke, a Union pole 135 feet tall was erected with an American flag atop it.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Hedlund, Election of 1860, 64.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, July 7, 1860.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., July 11, 1860.

A minor issue in the campaign was nativism. The Courier attempted to link the former Know-Nothing party of Kentucky with the Union movement and all other anti-Breckinridge forces. The paper called for a solid German vote for Breckinridge.<sup>25</sup> Other minor issues included the discussion of which party was the true national party, the conservative party and the corrupt party. The major issues were disunion and slavery.<sup>26</sup>

The Constitutional Union party of Kentucky was in the forefront of the attack charging Breckinridge and the Southern Democrats with disunion. Unionist Garrett Davis wrote the Journal, "I do not believe Mr. Breckinridge and his Kentucky friends mean disunion at this time; but those with whom he and they have united their fortune do."<sup>27</sup> Crittenden said, "I should hope Mr. Breckinridge is not a disunion man.... But Mr. Breckinridge has made himself head of a disunion party...."<sup>28</sup> Throughout the campaign the Bell and Douglas presses urged Breckinridge to answer two questions: would the South be justified in seceding if Lincoln were elected; and if the South seceded before Lincoln was inaugurated, before he committed an overt act against their Constitutional rights, would Breckinridge advise or vindicate their resistance by force?<sup>29</sup> Crittenden said "sectionalism...was gnawing

<sup>25</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, October 3, 1860.

<sup>26</sup>Hedlund, Election of 1860, 74.

<sup>27</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, July 19, 1860.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., August 4, 1860.

<sup>29</sup>Louisville Daily Democrat, September 2, 1860.

at the very foundation of the Union. It was the desire to stay that danger which gave birth to the Constitutional Union Party. And that party and its candidates wished to address as friend every man who loved the Union more than his section."<sup>30</sup>

The Union position on slavery, however, was rather confusing because the national convention had refused to discuss it, the party platform did not mention it, and the Union speakers differed on it. The party tried to straddle the question in order to appeal to everyone. At a rally in Winchester, Kentucky, two Union speakers had a disagreement as to whom they would have supported if Bell had not been running. Roger Hanson favored popular sovereignty and Douglas while John Huston preferred Breckinridge's policy of non-intervention.<sup>31</sup> Crittenden probably spoke for many Unionists when he said simply, "We have not now a single piece of territory to which slavery would go if it were invited; why then dispute about the possibility that will probably never arise?"<sup>32</sup> He further explained that the lack of harmony on the slavery and disunion issues was the reason he formed the Union party. It "would stand between those hostile parties and prevent, as far as possible any collision between them which might prove dangerous to the country, and if it could not succeed...it would yet break the shock of the encounter and save the country." He defended the lack of a Union platform saying, "we want no platform to captivate or ensnare men.

<sup>30</sup> Republican Banner and Nashville Whig, September 6, 1860, in Parks, Bell, 382.

<sup>31</sup> Frankfort Kentucky Yeoman, July 19, 1860.

<sup>32</sup> Louisville Daily Journal, August 4, 1860.

We appeal to them upon the simple principles of patriotism and of self preservation for their glory and the glory of our lands."<sup>33</sup>

The ground rules were established, the warriors chosen and the battle was about to commence. In Kentucky the Unionists immediately began closing ranks behind their new, if somewhat reluctant, standard bearers. On May 25, the Union party of Garrard County met at the Lancaster Courthouse. The meeting, presided over by John Owsley, unanimously ratified the platform and candidates of the Baltimore Union convention.<sup>34</sup> On June 11, the first day of the Russell County Circuit Court, E. L. Vanwinkle, one of the most active Union campaigners in Kentucky, made a strong pro-Union speech to the crowd that was assembled. They were reportedly enthusiastic over both the speech and the candidates.<sup>35</sup> Crittenden wrote that the Union party was the safest and most conservative party and afforded the nation "the best prospect of security and peace...it therefore seems to me to be our duty to support and vote for them."<sup>36</sup> As could be expected the Courier disagreed. In fact, on May 25 the Courier predicted the Unionists would soon withdraw their ticket, and support Lincoln.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., June 6, 1860.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., June 15, 1860.

<sup>36</sup>John J. Crittenden to William Smallwood and John P. Bowman, [no date], in Coleman, Crittenden, II, 215-16.

<sup>37</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, May 25, 1860.

In mid-June Prentice used the Journal to chastise the Kentucky Unionists for their apathy in organizing and supporting the movement.

The friends of Messrs. Bell and Everett. Although they have a ticket which they not only approve but feel proud of, are not yet thoroughly aroused in the great cause which they have sincerely at heart. In some places they are active and ardent; but in others they...are quiet whilst the Republicans and the Democrats on every side are working with zeal and energy.<sup>38</sup>

The Journal then scolded the Kentucky State Central Union Committee for inaction. It urged them to initiate immediate measures for organizing the party. "The time for indifference and inaction has passed, if it ever existed."<sup>39</sup>

The Union campaign in Kentucky officially began with a great rally at Mozart Hall in Louisville on June 30. The primary speaker was W. H. Wadsworth, an eloquent orator who was one of the most active campaigners for the Union cause in Kentucky.<sup>40</sup> On several occasions the large audience applauded its approval of Wadsworth's speech which defamed the Democratic party and specifically charged Breckinridge with disunion.<sup>41</sup> The next major Union rally was held on July 3 at the Louisville Courthouse. Over the speaker's rostrum was a banner, "the Union, the Constitution and the Enforcement of the Laws." The meeting was called to order by Hamilton Pope who served as moderator for the rally. The list of speakers included J. M. Harlan, J. R. Underwood, Neil S.

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<sup>38</sup> Louisville Daily Journal, June 20, 1860.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., June 26, 1860.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., July 1, 1860.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.



Brown of Tennessee, J. L. Helm and Judge William Bullock. Each speaker attempted to show the sectional nature of the Democratic and Republican parties and to prove that only through the election of the Union ticket could the people reasonably hope for pacification and the preservation of the Union. The people were warned that without proper organization and effort the election would be lost. The evening was culminated with a great fireworks display.<sup>42</sup>

The New York Times in commenting on the campaign in Kentucky observed that there was no visible support for Lincoln and no great support for Douglas, other than that provided by the anti-Breckinridge forces. The Times said the race narrowed to Breckinridge and Bell; the latter was sound and conservative and the Union would be safe in his hands. The Times predicted a 10,000-20,000 majority for the Union ticket.<sup>43</sup>

On June 20 each of Louisville's three major papers reported the death of R. R. Revill, the Clerk of the Court of Appeals. His death created a vacancy that the Governor was required by law to call a special election to fill. It was anticipated that the election would be held in August, and it was expected to provide a preliminary show of strength among the two Democratic factions and the Union party. In July Governor Magoffin announced that the special election would be held August 6. Several Unionists filed as candidates for the post.

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., July 4, 1860.

<sup>43</sup>New York Times, July 12, 1860.

Union leaders feared a splintering of their votes among several candidates would cost the party the election. Since none of the candidates was disposed to withdraw voluntarily, a satisfactory method of determining a single Union nominee had to be found. Prentice suggested the State Committee appoint a group of five to seven "intelligent and impartial gentlemen" to arbitrate the matter. Their decision would decide the matter.<sup>44</sup> The July 6 Journal announced that all Union Clerk nomination aspirants were to meet with the State Committee and the Prentice suggested arbitrators in Frankfort on Friday, July 13.<sup>45</sup> On July 17, it was announced that Leslie Combs had been selected to run for Clerk on the Union ticket. The Journal praised the choice. Combs, a veteran of the War of 1812, had served the state and his party for years. He was deemed deserving of some recompense for his years of service as he was now old, poor and in need of a job. Almost as an afterthought it was mentioned he was also qualified for the job.<sup>46</sup>

A large, enthusiastic Union meeting was held at the Versailles Courthouse in Woodford County on July 14. R. C. Graves presided over the meeting and H. C. McLeod served as secretary. The most important speech was delivered by John K. Goodloe, who presented five resolutions which were unanimously adopted. First, that the meeting approved Bell and Everett as the Union candidates.

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<sup>44</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, July 1, 1860.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., July 6, 1860.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., July 17, 1860.

Second, they approved the Union motto as the basis for the campaign. Third, the Union party was declared the only party capable of saving the nation. Fourth, it was determined that Kentucky would never leave the Union and finally, that Leslie Combs was an ideal candidate for Clerk. The meeting concluded with a long and laudatory eulogy of Crittenden and his efforts for Kentucky and the Union party.<sup>47</sup> In Louisville, the Unionists formed a Young Men's Union Club of Louisville and Jefferson County. The friends of Bell in the second ward of the city raised a Union pole on the corner of Jackson and Chestnut Streets, with an American flag bearing the names Bell and Everett.<sup>48</sup> They also issued a blanket challenge to cover all wagers that the second ward would cast a larger percentage of Union vote than any other ward in both the August and November elections.<sup>49</sup> In successive issues the Journal reported large Union meetings in Cadiz, Newport, where Combs spoke, Somerset, and in the first, second, third and fourth combined, fifth and sixth wards of Louisville. Each meeting adopted a series of resolutions similar to those presented by Goodloe.<sup>50</sup> With the Clerk's election approaching, Combs, despite his age, increased his speaking load. On July 21 he and Blanton Duncan spoke and were well received in Frankfort. The Journal reported Combs'

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., July 16, 1860.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., July 18, 1860.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., July 20, 21, 23, 24, 1860.

itinerary for the last week of the campaign when he had major speeches scheduled in Shelbyville, Louisville, Lebanon, Springfield, Bardstown and Bowling Green.<sup>51</sup>

At this juncture in the campaign, the Kentucky State Union Committee issued an address to the people of the state. It urged all men who were in favor of the preservation of the Union to vote for Combs rather than the Breckinridge Democratic nominee, Clinton McClarty, or the Douglas-sponsored R. R. Bolling.<sup>52</sup> A week before the election the Journal attempted to impress the need for a great Union victory, because it would be a foreshadowment of what could be expected in November. Prentice proclaimed that a victory for Combs would provide encouragement to Union parties elsewhere, especially in the North.<sup>53</sup> He continually urged the Unionists to strive on to victory.

The work laid out for next Monday and the intervening time is but the beginning of three months of vigorous effort. With complete and systematic organizing in every county, town, village and neighborhood, Bell and Everett will sweep this State and most of her Southern sisters, and we shall then rejoice in the...victory of Conservatives and Unionists over Factionists, Secessionists and Destructives.... Prepare to elect Leslie Combs first...and then give the electoral vote of Kentucky for those glorious patriots and statesmen, John Bell and Edward Everett.<sup>54</sup>

The appeals apparently succeeded, for in the last few days of the Clerk's race there was a marked increase in the number of Union meetings. Gatherings, which declared themselves for Bell,

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., July 25, 1860.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., July 24, 1860.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., July 30, 1860.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., August 1, 1860.

Everett and Combs, were held in Mason, Bracken, and Shelby counties as well as in Louisville's seventh and eighth wards. Each meeting formed a Union club. In Richmond, there was a great Union rally that included a ten mile hike for freedom.<sup>55</sup> Other meetings were held in Logan County and at Long Run in Jefferson County.<sup>56</sup>

On the last day of July a major Union rally was held in Louisville. All eight wards sent delegates, and it was reported that nearly everyone in attendance carried either a Union banner or a bell of some sort. The highlight of the program was a speech by Leslie Combs. The same evening a new Union pole was erected at the Pittsburg House on the corner of Brook and Water Streets. Atop the pole was a flag bearing the names Bell, Everett and Combs.<sup>57</sup> The final Union rally before the Clerk's election was held at Mozart Hall on August 2 with John J. Crittenden speaking. Most of his address dealt with the national election but he did support Combs for Clerk. Crittenden predicted that if elected Lincoln would be dominated by the Republican party which was anti-slavery. This would cause secession in the South. If Douglas were elected, the Breckinridge faction and the Republicans would thwart his every move, forcing him to establish a coalition government which would be riddled with internal difficulties. Crittenden claimed that Breckinridge was nominated by the Southern

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., July 25-27, 1860.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., July 27,30, 1860.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., July 31, 1860.

Democrats more to get Kentucky to join a possible Confederacy than from a desire to see him in the White House.<sup>58</sup>

I think no candid man, upon a fair review of all the parties, and their candidates and of the vital consequences of the election...will hesitate to say that prudence, patriotism and reason all say, take for your Chief Magistrate John Bell. When we see our party is leading us wrong, and then there is a better way to serve our country, every man then ought to have integrity, and heart, and patriotism, and independence enough to act for his country and not for his party.... You have but a simple task to perform.... It is to take care of the Union, the Constitution, and the Laws. Take care of these, and be assured they will take care of you. Your safety lies in the performance of that one little act.<sup>59</sup>

Prentice assured his readers that "that one little act" included voting for Leslie Combs. He urged the Unionists to go to the polls early to establish a big lead and then for each person who voted to go out and bring one other to the polls.<sup>60</sup> The Daily Courier charged that the Union party's motive for desiring to defeat McClarty was to show the anti-Breckinridge strength in the South and thus encourage the Republicans to think that Lincoln could win in November.<sup>61</sup>

The day after the election the Journal announced from the partial returns that Combs had won. In Louisville he carried every ward and built up a 4,383 to 1,087 lead over McClarty.<sup>62</sup> On September 6, the Courier published the final tally which showed

<sup>58</sup>John J. Crittenden, The Union, the Constitution, and the Laws (Louisville, 1860), 6-10.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 11, 12, 16.

<sup>60</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, August 4, 1860.

<sup>61</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, August 7, 1860.

<sup>62</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, August 7, 1860.

Combs the victor with a 23,223 majority over McClarty.<sup>63</sup> This state election encouraged Unionists in Kentucky and nationally to believe that their candidates had an excellent chance of winning the November elections. One Kentucky Unionist, Blanton Duncan, was particularly pleased with the results. for he won a \$1,000 bet on Combs. In a letter requesting his winnings, Duncan predicted Bell would carry Kentucky, Maryland, Tennessee and Delaware for sure. Despite the poor showing R. R. Bolling made in the Clerk's race, Duncan felt that Douglas would be strong in the South and that Breckinridge would carry only one state, South Carolina.<sup>64</sup> Soon after the election the Journal ran a small item that claimed, "we speak what we do know when we say that, immediately after the late Kentucky election, it was seriously contemplated in important quarters to have John C. Breckinridge withdraw from his position as a candidate for President."<sup>65</sup> The matter was weighed for several days, but it was reported that no one could run a better race than Breckinridge and so he stayed in.<sup>66</sup> The Frankfort Yeoman, belatedly, brought another issue onto the Kentucky political scene when it charged that "Democracy was defeated in the August election by intrigue, coalition, and fusion between Douglas and Bell

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<sup>63</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, September 6, 1860. The complete election returns are recorded in Appendix 9.

<sup>64</sup>Blanton Duncan to Cpt. \_\_\_\_\_, August 16, 1860, Miscellaneous Papers (Manuscript Division, Filson Club, Louisville, Ky.).

<sup>65</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, August 21, 1860.

<sup>66</sup>Turner, Decade of Change, 84.

factions."<sup>67</sup> The charge gained some momentum when Combs later appointed R. R. Bolling as the Assistant Clerk of the Court of Appeals. However, despite numerous accusations, no evidence was ever presented to prove collusion between the two.<sup>68</sup>

With the state election decided, the political attention of most Kentuckians returned to the national election. The day after the state election, the Journal reported the formation of a new Union club at Fisherville, Kentucky. The club, presided over by S. H. Reid, pledged its support to Bell and Everett and denounced the Democratic and Republican parties as secessionist and subversive to the national good.<sup>69</sup> Two days later it was reported another 135 foot Union pole had been erected in New Liberty.<sup>70</sup>

On August 10 the Journal carried the Address of the National Executive Committee of the Constitutional Union Party to the People of the United States. The Address was an eight page pamphlet prepared to explain why Bell and Everett should be preferred over the candidates on the other three tickets. It began with a brief review of the previous decade and how it had been riddled with strife as evidenced by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the violence in Kansas, and the fact that a purely sectional party,

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<sup>67</sup>Frankfort Yeoman, September 18, 1860.

<sup>68</sup>Hedlund, Election of 1860, 97-98.

<sup>69</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, August 7, 1860.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., August 9, 1860.



the Republicans, had polled over a million votes in 1856.<sup>71</sup> The Address explained that while Douglas was more popular in the North, Breckinridge was more popular in the South. Douglas would not carry a state in the South, and Breckinridge would not get a single Northern electoral vote. It was, therefore, a two man race between Lincoln and Bell, and Lincoln was not even on the ballot in 15 of the 33 states.<sup>72</sup> A further description of Lincoln's qualifications revealed that,

for the first time in the history of the country, a great party has nominated for the Presidency a man unknown, even by name, to a majority of the people. Mr. Lincoln, we admit, is a respectable man, a respectable lawyer, and a popular speaker, of probably more than average ability; but, what a meagre catalogue is this of claims for the highest office!<sup>73</sup>

The Address ended with a reiteration of the Henry Clay speech predicting future political turmoil. The time Clay had predicted so eloquently and described so graphically was already at hand, and the Constitutional Union movement was the party Clay had forecast.

The blessing promised to the peace workers shall rest upon all who address themselves to this...work. We wish to preserve the Union...by the election of our national and patriotic candidates, to preserve for our sons the glorious heritage bequested us by our sires, so that it shall remain the boast of American citizens that they have one country, one Constitution and one destiny.<sup>74</sup>

The Address was signed by Alex A. Boteler, Chairman, and L. A. Whitely, Secretary of the National Union Executive Committee.

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<sup>71</sup>National Union Executive Committee, Address of the National Executive Committee of the Constitutional Union Party to the People of the United States (Washington, 1860), 2.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 8.

The Courier charged the Unionists with hypocrisy. From the eight page Address the editor of the Courier excerpted one sentence: "An attempt to govern the country upon the distinctive and peculiar principles of the Republican party would be fatal to the Union." The Courier charged the Unionists with paying lip service to that credence while working actively toward the election of the Republican ticket. The Courier explained that if the Union party was truly devoted to the Union it would withdraw its ticket and throw its support to the party that completely opposed the Republican ideology--the Breckinridge Democrats.<sup>75</sup> A few days later the Daily Democrat replied that the Unionists should really pool their forces with the Douglas Democrats. The Democrat explained that the basic split between the Breckinridge Democrats and the Republicans was over the handling of slavery in the territories. If the Bellites were for Congress resolving the problem they would have to support Lincoln or Breckinridge and the method each advocated for Congress to solve the problem. However, if, as they claimed, the Unionists felt the whole issue should be removed from the halls of Congress, then it must of necessity evolve to the people themselves to decide, the very position advocated by Douglas.<sup>76</sup>

Since Kentucky Unionists had not fallen prey to either the Courier's persuasiveness or its rationale, the paper next attempted to discredit the Union candidate in the eyes of his followers. On

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<sup>75</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, August 11, 1860.

<sup>76</sup>Louisville Daily Democrat, August 15, 1860.

August 14-16, the Courier presented a serialized version of John Bell's life, "His Past History Connected with the Public Service," that was reprinted from the Nashville Union and American of August 7. The "History" attempted to defame Bell by showing his instability in continually changing parties. It showed he had alternately been for and then against slavery in the territories, that he had criticized such Presidents as Andrew Jackson and, worst of all, that Bell and Clay had had a falling out over Clay's actions in the 1824 presidential election.<sup>77</sup> Next the Courier attempted to show the relative merits of Bell and Breckinridge by taking typical excerpts from speeches of each on common topics. Concerning the Know-Nothing party, Bell was declared to say that while he was never a member of it, he agreed with all the principles the party stood for, while Breckinridge was reported to have said that the party principles were contrary to everything the Constitution and the Union stood for. Bell was next presented in a long tirade against Henry Clay, whereas Breckinridge praised him as a great leader and patriot. In the final statement, Bell was quoted as saying, "give me separation; give me disunion; give me anything in preference to a Union sustained only by power, by Constitutional and legal ties...." Breckinridge countered that "the Constitution and the equality of the States: These are the symbols of everlasting Union: Let these be the rallying cries of the people."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, August 14-16, 1860.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., August 24, 1860.

The Unionists were unperturbed by the Democratic efforts. On August 17, a new Union club was formed in Bloomington in Hardin County. Dr. Robert P. McMurtery was elected President and J. E. Shelton Secretary of the new group. The initial meeting was addressed by V. P. Armstrong who was so eloquent that it was reported that even some of the local Democrats were convinced that Douglas and Breckinridge had no chance of victory in Kentucky.<sup>79</sup> On August 21 a torchlight parade, held in Georgetown, ended with pro-Union speeches by J. M. Harlan, Leslie Combs and a Mr. Mundy from Philadelphia.<sup>80</sup> Other large Union meetings were held in Ohio, Hancock and Union counties. At the last of these a large Union pole was erected to remind all who saw it to support Bell and Everett.<sup>81</sup> The Journal proclaimed that, despite the dire predictions of the Courier and the Democrat, the Union movement was daily gaining strength in Kentucky and across the South. Only South Carolina was conceded to the Democrats, while Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia and Louisiana were considered sure Union victories.<sup>82</sup> Prentice insisted that the Union party would carry the South and enough Northern states to win the election.<sup>83</sup> He wrote regarding the anticipated election of Bell that "four years of such an administration would give ample cooling

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<sup>79</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, August 23, 1860.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., August 24-27, 1860.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., August 24, 1860.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., August 21, 1860.

time and afford the best hope, the only rational hope, for permanent peace on the slave question, the overthrow of sectionalism, the refraternizing of the nation, and the durable security of the Union."<sup>84</sup>

On August 24 the Kentucky State Union Committee published in the Journal a five point plan to organize the Kentucky Union party for the presidential election. First, the Committee appointed one man to serve as the Chairman of the County Committee for each county. That man was to appoint a County Committee which was empowered to appoint Precinct Committees of not less than four people per precinct who were to organize each neighborhood in their area. Second, the County Chairman was to serve as the link between the State Committee and the individual workers. Third, each Precinct Committee was required to ascertain the political views of every person in their precinct and form a plan to assure that each Union supporter got to the polls on election day. Fourth, each Precinct Committee was urged to devise a plan to insure that the old, ill and infirm in their area got to the polls. Finally, every member of the Union party was urged to vote before 10:00 A.M. This tactic would build a large early lead that might discourage the opposition, and it would free the precinct workers to bring others to the polls.<sup>85</sup>

Following the State Union Committee's announcement, two new Union clubs were formed. J. D. Williams was elected President of

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., August 22, 1860.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., August 30, 1860.

the club in Neetsville in Adair County. The initial meeting was addressed by A. B. Williams, James McWhorter, Logan S. McWhorter, William F. Neet and James Beard. At the end of the meeting a large Union pole was erected that was topped by an American flag with the words "Liberty and Union" inscribed on it.<sup>86</sup> The second new group was the Young Men's Union Club of Eminence. E. D. Jones was selected Chairman of the club and among several resolutions passed unanimously was "a cordial invitation to all conservative men, irrespective of party feeling and former prejudice to cooperate with us in carrying out the principles set forth by the Constitution."<sup>87</sup> In early September the State Union Committee, belatedly, thanked Kentucky Unionists for their support of Leslie Combs for Clerk because it had strengthened the party nationally.

This was the beginning of the end. As it was in August, so let it be in November.... And by our action let us further proclaim not only our unalterable hostility to the Northern Republicans and Southern secession, but our fixed determination, that as far as depends upon us, we will stand by, support, and uphold the Union against all attacks from without or within, and against all ultraisms, whether at the North, or at the South.<sup>88</sup>

On successive days, the Journal reported the raising of a Union pole at the Seven Mile House on Bardstown Road, a great Union rally at Hustonville in Lincoln County where Joshua Bell spoke, and the formation of a new Bell and Everett club at Brandenburg in Meade County.<sup>89</sup> As late as mid-September, Prentice was still predicting

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., August 31, 1860.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., September 4, 1860.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., September 10-12, 1860.

a Union victory at the polls, although most men believed the best prospects of a Union victory lay in having the election sent to the House of Representatives. Prentice proclaimed that the party had 66 certain electoral votes and good prospects that could easily raise the total to 101.<sup>90</sup> On September 26, he announced that the friends of Bell and Everett in Indiana held the fate of the Union party in their hands.<sup>91</sup>

Toward the end of September, John Bell made his only foray away from Tennessee, and then it was in a non-political activity. He attended the Kentucky State Fair as the guest of John J. Crittenden. On September 24 both men returned to Nashville for a great Union rally. They were greeted at the train by a huge crowd.<sup>92</sup> The following day there was a great Union parade led by several bands such as the Bell Stars of Murfreesboro and the Bell Ringers of Franklin. Behind the bands came the dignitaries led by Bell and Crittenden. Following the dignitaries was a van carrying a 2,000 pound bell that could literally be heard for miles. The van had banners on each side. One read, "Bell and Everett--Patriots upon whom the whole nation can look with pride and say, they are our jewels," and the other, "John J. Crittenden: the true son of a Noble State."<sup>93</sup> The rally was attended by 15,000 people, and the primary speakers were Tennessee Congressman Horace Maynard and

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid., September 10, 1860.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., September 26, 1860.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Republican Banner and Nashville Whig, September 26, 1860, in Parks, Bell, 381.

Crittenden.<sup>94</sup> Throughout his speech Crittenden denounced Breckinridge for stirring up sectional problems. He accused Breckinridge of knowing he could not win the election and of campaigning only to divide the Democratic vote to ensure a Republican victory which would give the South an excuse to secede from the Union.<sup>95</sup> Crittenden ended his enthusiastically received speech by saying,

a patriot can find peace and quiet in neither camp, but division in both.... The Union party...holds the banner of peace--which says, let us return from these violent conflicts--let us take care to observe the Constitution, the Union and the enforcement of the laws and when that is done peace will be restored to all.<sup>96</sup>

Crittenden was moderately active during the 1860 campaign. He spoke primarily in Kentucky but occasionally accepted engagements in the other border slave states, as in Tennessee, and in Missouri, where in late October he made a brief tour promoting the Union cause.<sup>97</sup>

During the early part of October, Union enthusiasm was swelling in Kentucky. Daily the Journal printed articles praising John Bell and attempting to offset the Courier's earlier articles of a split between Henry Clay and Bell. The Journal claimed that Clay had once recommended Bell for a cabinet position in the William Henry Harrison administration.<sup>98</sup> Large Union rallies were

<sup>94</sup>Ibid.

<sup>95</sup>Kirwan, Crittenden, 363.

<sup>96</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, September 27, 1860.

<sup>97</sup>Stabler, Union Party, 501.

<sup>98</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, October 5, 1860.



held at Mount Vernon in Rockcastle County, and in Clark County, and another Union pole was erected in Brandenburg.<sup>99</sup> Some of the optimism of the Kentucky Unionists dissipated when it was reported that the Republicans had made a clean sweep of the gubernatorial and state elections in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana. Prentice bemoaned the results but still desperately predicted that with good organization and hard work the states could be redeemed for the Union party in November.<sup>100</sup> However the Unionists' optimism may have been affected, their enthusiasm was untouched. Major rallies were planned for the end of October in Irvine, Boonsville, Manchester, Hazard, Mt. Pleasant, Barbourville, Williamsburg, London and Mount Vernon. Furthermore, two or more from the following list of prominent Union campaigners were pledged to speak at each meeting: John J. Crittenden, Leslie Combs, H. W. Wadsworth, Joshua Bell, Daniel Breck, G. W. Dunlap, R. W. Hanson, George McKee, J. M. Harlan and Green Adams.<sup>101</sup> On October 17, the Journal reported a Union rally at Parker's Spring in Trigg County. Rain held the attendance down to 6,000 who heard Q. Q. Quigley, James Jackson and E. P. Barbour praise the Union standard bearers.<sup>102</sup>

On October 25, two weeks before the election, Prentice estimated that Bell would carry nine of Kentucky's ten districts, losing the First, and carry the state by 22,500 votes. He then

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid., October 12, 1860.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., October 11, 1860.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., September 29, 1860.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., October 17, 1860.

urged a last big push by the Unionists to carry the First District and build the winning margin to 30,000 votes.<sup>103</sup> While still confident that Bell would carry Kentucky, in mid-October the Journal for the first time began to hedge on the Union chances nationally. The paper charged that the Breckinridge Democrats in the North had thrown their support to the Republicans in the recent state elections. The Journal repeated the claim that the Breckinridge followers realized their candidate had no chance to win the presidential election and so were now attempting to get Lincoln elected to provide the South with an excuse to secede.<sup>104</sup> Prentice pointed out that the North had a majority of the electoral votes, so it was up to the anti-Lincoln forces in the North to determine the outcome of the election. Since Breckinridge, supposedly, had thrown his support to Lincoln, this left only the Bell and Douglas forces to stop a sure Republican victory. For the first time Prentice urged a united stand of the Bell and Douglas forces to keep Lincoln from getting a majority of the electoral votes. This would force the election into the House of Representatives where Bell would still have a chance of being the compromise victor.<sup>105</sup>

In the final week before the election there was a flurry of final Union meetings and rallies. Every ward in the city of Louisville had a meeting that week as did many of the county

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid., October 25, 1860.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., October 15, 1860.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., October 16, 1860.

groups.<sup>106</sup> The grand finale to the Union campaign in Kentucky was a Union Torchlight Parade on November 2 in Louisville. Each ward of the city had a band and a delegation of marchers, and there were also delegations from outlying counties and other states. In all, over 5,000 people participated in the parade and carried more than 800 torches, and the streets were lined with people enjoying the spectacle. Prentice estimated the size of the parade would have been twice as large if the streets had not been so muddy from an all day rain.<sup>107</sup> But the mud and rain did not dampen the spirits of those who did participate. The bands played, and those without torches carried Bell and Everett banners and posters, the people sang or chanted the Union motto, "the Constitution, the Union and the enforcement of the laws," and each ward included in its procession a large wagon from which to set off fireworks.<sup>108</sup> The following day's Journal praised the Kentucky Unionists, especially those in Louisville; whatever the outcome of the election, they could know they had done their best to preserve the Union.<sup>109</sup>

Election day in Kentucky, November 6, dawned cold and rainy, an ominous beginning for what would be a bleak day for most Unionists in Kentucky and the nation.<sup>110</sup> The election was conducted

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid., October 30,31, November 3-5, 1860.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., November 3, 1860.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>Jasper B. Shannon, "The Political Process in Kentucky," Kentucky Law Journal XLV (Sept. 1957), 406.

viva voce except for dumb people.<sup>111</sup> The election day issues of each of Louisville's three major papers were filled with items encouraging the people to vote for the candidate that paper supported and criticizing the other candidates. The Journal promoted Bell and warned of the disastrous results of casting a vote for Lincoln or Breckinridge. Rather obviously missing was any comment for or against Douglas.<sup>112</sup> The day after the election the Journal reported that Bell had easily carried Louisville, building up a 1,200 vote lead over Douglas and a nearly 3,000 vote margin over Breckinridge. Lincoln received less than 100 votes.<sup>113</sup> The same issue reported that while all returns were incomplete, it appeared that Bell had carried Kentucky but that the Republicans had won the election. Prentice was right on both counts. Kentucky went Unionist by 12,000 votes over Breckinridge and by 40,000 over Douglas, carrying every district except the First. Lincoln mustered just over 1,000 votes in his native state.<sup>114</sup> Nationally, however, Lincoln carried a nearly solid North and garnered 180 electoral votes and the presidency. Breckinridge carried the majority of the South and won 72 electoral votes. Bell and Douglas managed 39 and 12 electoral votes, respectively. Bell carried three states, Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia, while Douglas carried but one, Missouri, although three of his votes

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Louisville Daily Journal, November 6, 1860.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., November 7, 1860.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., November 27, 1860. The complete election returns are recorded in Appendix 10.

came from New Jersey.<sup>115</sup> The Journal lamented, "We have prayed fervently against this event and we have worked against it with every energy in our natures strained to the utmost; its occurrence fills us with sorrow and anxiety...yet we do not on account of it despair of our country; and least of all do we intend by reason of it to abandon her...."<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>Richardson, "Constitutional Union Party," 160.

<sup>116</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, November 7, 1860.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

With the election over, the political attention of most Kentuckians turned to the question of secession. Would the South secede? And if so, would Kentucky go with her? Less than a week after the election the Journal called on all Constitutional Union men in Kentucky and the other border states to hold immediate meetings and renew their pledges to the Union.<sup>1</sup> There soon appeared reports of meetings across the state, such as the one at Henderson, where it was resolved unanimously that "the voice of our country's peril must surely quell the spirit of party in the breast of every citizen...."<sup>2</sup> Another meeting in Fayette County decided that "Kentucky...is compelled to maintain the Union.... That the election of Abraham Lincoln...affords no cause for the dissolution of the Union."<sup>3</sup> After his defeat John Bell urged his supporters to resist secession; he felt the Southern grievances could be resolved within the Union.<sup>4</sup> As late as April, 1861 Bell urged Tennessee not to secede.<sup>5</sup> However, after the firing

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<sup>1</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, November 10, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., November 15, 1860.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Parks, Bell, 392.

<sup>5</sup>Richardson, "Constitutional Union Party," 164.

on Fort Sumter, the Union presidential candidate became an active secessionist.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, John J. Crittenden, who founded the Constitutional Union Party, remained a staunch Unionist and made his futile attempt to avert war with the Crittenden Compromise.<sup>7</sup>

November 6, 1860, represented the beginning of the end for the Constitutional Unionists. The party never held another national convention and never ran another presidential candidate. At the state level the movement survived a little longer, in places. In the North, the Constitutional Union Party almost immediately disappeared into the Republican party, except in New York where it lasted as a separate entity until 1862. In the deep South the movement was absorbed in the Confederacy. Only in the border states, like Kentucky, where the Union movement had been the strongest, did it survive for a time.<sup>8</sup>

Because Kentucky was a slave state, many people expected her to secede, and she received a great deal of solicitation from the South to join the Confederacy and little encouragement from the North to stay in the Union.<sup>9</sup> Numerous meetings were held at the local, county and state level to decide what part Kentucky should play in the anticipated civil war. It was generally agreed that secession would resolve nothing and merely aggravate already apparent evils; that it was a step toward anarchy and aggression;

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<sup>6</sup>Parks, Bell, 404.

<sup>7</sup>Stabler, Union Party, 719.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 726.

<sup>9</sup>Thomas Speed, The Union Cause in Kentucky, 1860-1865 (New York, 1907), 20.

and that Kentucky was prepared to "stand by, support and uphold the Union."<sup>10</sup>

Kentucky was typical of the border slave states. After several of the deep South states seceded, the immediate reaction was to rally to the Union cause. After the outbreak of war some of the border slave states decided to cast their lot with the Confederacy. Kentucky did not. With the anticipated civil war approaching, the Kentucky press divided over the course of action the state should take. The Louisville Daily Courier, the Frankfort Yeoman and the Lexington Kentucky Statesman advocated secession. The Louisville Daily Journal, the Louisville Daily Democrat and the Frankfort Commonwealth were equally adamant that Kentucky should stay in the Union.<sup>11</sup> The Journal urged that all the border slave states meet in Frankfort and collectively decide what to do in the event of a Civil War.<sup>12</sup> "Shall we mediate on behalf of the Union or co-operate against it? The people of the Border States of the South must pursue one or the other of these two lines of conduct... no other path is open before us."<sup>13</sup>

On January 8, two conventions were held in Louisville. The Constitutional Unionists held a meeting in Mozart Hall. The meeting was called to order by Judge Bullock and ex-Governor John L. Helms was selected to preside. On a motion from Andrew Monroe it was

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 24; Louisville Daily Journal, November 15, 1860.

<sup>11</sup>Edward Porter Thompson, History of the First Kentucky Brigade (Cincinnati, 1868), 35.

<sup>12</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, January 4, 1861.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., January 8, 1861.



agreed to send a committee to the Douglas Democratic convention, which was meeting simultaneously, and determine if the two pro-Union forces in Kentucky could work together in their common cause. Garrett Davis was named to head the twelve man committee. The Democratic meeting, at Concert Hall, was presided over by former Unionist, Charles A. Wickliffe. The Democrats appointed a committee to meet with the Davis committee.<sup>14</sup> The two committees wrote, and the two conventions ratified, a joint resolution that stated that Kentucky had been wronged more and suffered greater damage and loss of property than many of the deep South states. Nevertheless, Kentucky was going to remain in the Union. The joint resolution also recommended the adoption of the Crittenden Compromise as one or several constitutional amendments to be added immediately.<sup>15</sup> In Kentucky, realizing their common purpose, the Douglas Democrats and the Constitutional Unionists joined forces in a Union-Democratic party to crush the effectiveness of the secessionists who were using the name and machinery of the Breckinridge Democrats.

The first test of the new "joint" party came in the municipal elections of 1861. All pro-Union men were urged to support this ticket whether they had voted for Bell or Douglas.<sup>16</sup> A week before the April election in Louisville, the Journal appealed to all conservative men to support the Union ticket, the

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., January 9, 1861.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., January 10, 1861.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., March 11, 1861.

name generally applied to the merged party, even though it was not the Union party of old. Prentice assured his readers that despite the fact the ticket was fairly evenly split between former Constitutional Unionists and Douglas Democrats, they were all pro-Union men.<sup>17</sup> The new party was overwhelmingly successful.<sup>18</sup>

With the outbreak of actual fighting in April, 1861, there was a vast and rapid realignment of party politics in Kentucky. The old Constitutional Union Party fissioned even further, losing much of its separate identity within the joint party. Crittenden, as could be expected, immediately urged Kentucky to remain neutral throughout the war. Some former states' righters, like James Guthrie and Archibald Dixon, joined the ranks of the Union-Democratic party, while a former Union campaigner, Blanton Duncan, accepted a colonel's commission in the Confederate Army and raised a small regiment in Kentucky and led it off to war.<sup>19</sup> On April 15 when President Lincoln requested troops from Kentucky for the Union Army, Governor Magoffin refused. At a Union rally on April 18 in Louisville, attended by 3,000 people, several of the speakers including Guthrie, Dixon and Judge Bullock, approved the Governor's decision and urged Kentucky to remain neutral in the war, providing troops for neither side.<sup>20</sup> However, Unionists J. M. Harlan and William H. Wadsworth accepted colonels' commissions

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., March 30, 1861.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., April 8, 1861.

<sup>19</sup>Collins, History of Kentucky, I, 88, 90.

<sup>20</sup>Edward C. Smith, The Borderland in the Civil War (New York, 1927), 264.

in the Union Army. Another former Union campaigner, Lovell Rousseau, accepted a Union commission and started Camp Jo Holt in Indiana where he recruited many Kentuckians for the Union Army. By mid-1861 Union troops were stationed along the northern border of the state and Southern troops along the Southern edge.<sup>21</sup>

In this uncomfortable posture, the Border State Convention convened on May 27 in Frankfort. It was a failure. Only four representatives from Missouri and one from Tennessee joined the twelve Kentucky delegates. John J. Crittenden was elected President of the convention. After six days of deliberation, an address to the people of the United States was issued, and the Kentucky delegates prepared a separate address to the people of Kentucky. Both urged reconciliation.<sup>22</sup>

In August, 1861 the election for the Kentucky state legislature was held. The Union-Democratic party was overwhelmingly successful. Only in the First District, which bordered on the Mississippi River, were the states' rights Democrats victorious.<sup>23</sup> After this great Union victory, Kentucky unofficially left the policy of neutrality and began actively recruiting troops into the Union Army. This trend was endangered when General John C. Fremont freed the slaves in Missouri by military order. Many Kentuckians threw down their weapons and refused to fight; they were willing to

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 278, 280.

<sup>22</sup>Collins, History of Kentucky, I, 91-92.

<sup>23</sup>Smith, The Borderland, 284-85.

serve to preserve the Union but not to free the slaves. Lincoln later rescinded the order.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the state's policy of neutrality, many Southern strategists were sure that Kentucky would ultimately join the Confederacy. On September 3, 1861, southern General Leonidas Polk marched his troops across the state line to Hickman and Columbus. Two days later, northern General U. S. Grant established a post at Paducah. Most Kentuckians were furious that the South had violated the neutrality and thereafter the state's official policy was pro-Northern.<sup>25</sup> In September, 1861, the Louisville Daily Courier, the major secessionist organ in Kentucky, was declared treasonous by the federal government and denied the use of the mail service for distribution of its papers. The Kentucky legislature then suspended the paper's operations altogether, and on September 26 the Courier's editor, Reuben Durrett, was arrested for aiding the enemy.<sup>26</sup> On November 18, 1861, many of Kentucky's states' righters, realizing their effectiveness through normal political channels was waning, met in Russellville and set up a provisional state government and successfully petitioned for admission to the Confederacy.<sup>27</sup> In December, 1861, John C. Breckinridge, who had been commissioned a Brigadier General in the Confederate Army, was expelled from the

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 293.

<sup>25</sup>Clark, History of Kentucky, 447-48.

<sup>26</sup>Collins, History of Kentucky, I, 94-95.

<sup>27</sup>Thompson, First Brigade, 45-46.

United States' Senate. Garrett Davis was selected to fill the vacancy.<sup>28</sup>

In 1862 Kentucky became further entrenched in the Union cause, partially by choice and partially because of the Union troops present in the state. Democratic Governor Magoffin resigned in August, 1862. Since Lieutenant Governor Linn Boyd had previously died in office, the Governorship fell to the Speaker of the Senate, Democrat John F. Fisk. He did not want the difficulties of being Governor with a Union-Democratic legislature and so resigned his Speakership. The Kentucky Senate then elected a Union-Democrat, James F. Robinson, a former Unionist who had not been very active in the 1860 election. After taking office as Speaker, Robinson was immediately promoted to the vacant Governor's position. Two days later, Fisk was re-elected Speaker.<sup>29</sup>

On February 25, 1863, J. R. Underwood, a former Constitutional Unionist, then Chairman of the State Union-Democratic Committee, announced that the party convention for Kentucky would be held in Louisville on March 18, 1863, to nominate a candidate for governor.<sup>30</sup> When the convention met, Leslie Combs was the temporary President but when permanent officers were selected, a former Democrat, Charles A. Marshall of Mason County, was elected President of the convention. J. A. Cravens of Indiana was recognized as an honored guest and asked to say a

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<sup>28</sup>Collins, History of Kentucky, I, 97-98.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 108-109.

<sup>30</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, February 25, 1863.

few words. Cravens, a former Democrat, claimed the old Democratic party was the only one that could save the nation. This brought cries of protest from several in the audience that this was a Union meeting.<sup>31</sup> After some delay the convention nominated Joshua Bell for Governor and Richard T. Jacob for Lieutenant Governor. Bell had been the Opposition party candidate for governor in 1859 but had taken little part in the 1860 election although he had been considered a Unionist. Jacob had been a Douglas Democrat.<sup>32</sup>

On May 4, Joshua Bell declined the gubernatorial nomination, and former Democrat Thomas E. Bramlette replaced him on the ticket.<sup>33</sup> The Daily Journal reported a week before the election that the Democratic party in Kentucky was really a secessionist party led by ex-Governor Beriah Magoffin and Lazarus T. Powell. The paper went on to say that the so-called Union party, led by former Democrats James Guthrie and Richard T. Jacob was the true Democratic party.<sup>34</sup> At this juncture, the Unionists' one true guiding light, John J. Crittenden, died. And with his passing went the last serious hope of a Constitutional Union party in Kentucky as a party unto itself. The conservative movement that Crittenden had played such a major role creating, seemingly died with him. Even George D. Prentice, who had been one of the most active and vocal Union party supporters, had thrown his support to the new

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., March 19, 1863.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., March 20, 1863.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., May 4, 1863.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., July 27, 1863.

"joint" party, and former Unionist Charles A. Wickliffe was the gubernatorial candidate for the Democratic party.<sup>35</sup>

By mid-1863 the Constitutional Union party in Kentucky was no longer recognizable as a political force, and by 1864 nothing remained but the name. Thomas Bramlette was victorious in the August, 1863 gubernatorial election with an assist from the Union troops. Martial law was declared a week before the election, and no one who had given voluntary aid to the Confederacy was entitled to vote.<sup>36</sup> The military was present at every polling station on election day. At several, by military order, the Democratic nominees were removed from the ballot and at others men voting Democratic were immediately arrested for disloyalty.<sup>37</sup> In May, 1864, the Union-Democratic Convention met in Louisville and appointed delegates, including Prentice, to attend the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. The state convention recommended General George McClellan for President and Governor Thomas Bramlette for Vice President.<sup>38</sup> In 1864, with no compromise candidate like John Bell running, Kentuckians were forced to make a choice between the Republicans and the Democrats. In the election only 40.5% of Kentucky's eligible voters went to the polls, significantly below the national average of 65.0%. However, of those who did participate, better than a two to one majority

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., August 3, 1863.

<sup>37</sup>Collins, History of Kentucky, I, 127-28.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

cast their ballots for the Democrat George McClellan. Even the former Whig, American, Opposition and Constitutional Union strongholds voted Democratic. For many of these counties it was the first Democratic victory since 1828 when Andrew Jackson ran, and for a few it was the first time they had ever voted Democratic.<sup>39</sup>

By 1864 the Constitutional Union Party, in Kentucky and nationally, was nothing but a memory and to many a rather insignificant one. Some historians recorded the movement as being the efforts of a "body of hesitating and semi-detached politicians," a "party of passivity," out of step with the times. It was denounced as an unrealistic party that would not face the slavery issue. Some historians just glossed over the Union party as inconsequential.<sup>40</sup> The Constitutional Union Party, even in its strongholds, survived only half a decade and failed in its attempt to avert a Civil War. Nevertheless, brevity and failure should not reduce the Union movement to unimportance. It was the genuine attempt of serious politicians to provide a troubled nation with a moderate course, a middle ground between the Union-splitting goals of the Democratic and Republican parties. The Constitutional Unionists had no new alternatives to offer in 1860. Their goal was only to elect a moderate, open-minded President who would be acceptable to both sections of the country. The major goal of the Union movement

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<sup>39</sup> Jasper B. Shannon and Ruth McQuown, Presidential Politics in Kentucky (Lexington, 1950), 37-38.

<sup>40</sup> Richardson, "Constitutional Union Party," 144; James Bryce, The American Commonwealth (2 vols., New York, 1893-5), I, 647.



was to gain four more years of peace, a time during which they hoped a peaceful solution to the nation's problems could be found.

The party drew its greatest strength from the border slave states like Kentucky. This was reasonable, because in the border states people were aware of both styles of living and incorporated portions of each in their life styles, without being fully committed to either. It was understandable, being caught between the two sections, that Kentucky and the other border states would attempt to play the role of peace makers; they realized that if war came it would probably be fought in large part on their soil. As Archibald Dixon analyzed the situation,

We have a million white population resident in a State only separated by the Ohio River from Indiana, Illinois and Ohio, with a population of five million. Through each State are numerous railroads, able to transport an army in a few days to our doors.... In sixty days the North can pour an army of one hundred thousand men upon every part of us.... If we remain in the Union, we are safe; if we go out we will be invaded; if we hold as we are we are safe; if we go out we will be overwhelmed.<sup>41</sup>

Kentucky also feared a monetary loss by taking part in a civil war. Before the war, Kentucky traded with both sections. Since the war was anticipated as being a brief war, many merchants saw no reason to antagonize either part of the market for so-brief a disagreement.

Another strong reason for the neutral position Kentucky took in the 1860 election was tradition. Most Kentuckians traditionally voted the Whig ticket and during the 1850's the conservative ticket, under whatever name it ran. In 1860 the Constitutional Union party was the most conservative ticket, and the party leaders included John J. Crittenden, John Bell, Charles Morehead and Leslie Combs.

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<sup>41</sup>Turner, Decade of Change, 85-86.

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<sup>41</sup>Turner, Decade of Change, 85-86.

Each of these men represented the old Whig philosophy. They had built their conservative reputations and strong personal followings before the Constitutional Union movement began, and when they adopted the Union party, so did most of their personal supporters. In the election of 1860 Kentuckians voted as they had for years, with little crossing of party lines.

The Whig strongholds for the most part went Constitutional Union or, rarely, Douglas Democratic. The traditional Democratic strength went to Breckinridge with Douglas victorious on occasion. The election returns in Kentucky showed that tradition was a greater motivational factor than slave owning. In the largest slaveholding region of the state, the Bluegrass area, a former Whig stronghold, Bell carried nearly every county with large majorities. He also did very well in portions of eastern Kentucky that were traditionally conservative, where slave ownership represented an insignificant portion of the population.<sup>42</sup> Bell carried 34 Kentucky counties with better than 50% of the vote and ten of these had more than 33% slaveholders, including Woodford County which had the largest percentage of slaveholders in the state, 45%.<sup>43</sup> Breckinridge's strength, obviously, came not from the slaveholding counties, but rather from the traditional Democratic counties. He carried only two counties with a high percentage of slaveholders, Scott and Franklin. Breckinridge carried only five counties that were not traditionally Democratic and, ironically, had his largest majority in Johnson

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<sup>42</sup>Shannon and McQuown, Presidential Politics, 32.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 33.

County, which had the third smallest percentage of slaveholders in the state. He lost by only four votes to Bell in Jackson County which had the smallest.<sup>44</sup>

In five national and state elections in 1860 and 1861, Kentucky consistently rejected the "either-or" doctrines of the North and South and sought the middle of the road position, hoping to preserve both the Union and slavery. Due to their conservative and loyal backgrounds, their geographic location, their economic ties and their traditional voting patterns, most Kentuckians in 1860 wanted to preserve the status quo. The only party that attempted to represent such a position in the 1860 Presidential election was the Crittenden led Constitutional Union party. The Constitutional Union party represented the voice and hope of many Americans, especially those in the border states like Kentucky, who wanted to avert a civil war. Unfortunately for the Constitutional Union party, unfortunately for the nation, in 1860 the majority of America's people were resolved to settle their differences by force rather than compromise. The Constitutional Union party failed, but in failing it had offered the nation the option of peace.

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 34.

## APPENDIX 1

OFFICIAL RETURNS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS  
OF 1848 IN KENTUCKY<sup>1</sup>

<u>County</u>	<u>Taylor</u>	<u>Cass</u>
Adair	568	549
Allen	423	553
Anderson	334	547
Ballard	277	281
Barren	1452	1048
Bath	724	782
Boone	935	769
Bourbon	1172	486
Boyle	773	347
Bracken	795	472
Breathett	143	151
Breckinridge	1006	422
Bullitt	499	399
Butler	349	204
Caldwell	826	841
Calloway	227	664
Campbell	511	814
Carroll	433	428
Carter	243	510
Casey	529	196
Christian	1132	786
Clarke	1046	319
Clay	377	125
Clinton	286	294
Crittenden	342	399
Cumberland	643	153
Daviess	986	605
Edmonson	249	209
Estill	485	238
Fayette	1541	781
Fleming	1159	700
Floyd	260	225
Franklin	926	664
Gallatin	360	368
Garrard	1187	191

<sup>1</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, November 12, 1848.

Official returns for the Presidential elections of 1848 in Kentucky--  
continued.

<u>County</u>	<u>Taylor</u>	<u>Cass</u>
Grant	485	529
Graves	468	772
Green	517	512
Greenup	640	516
Grayson	507	345
Hancock	304	166
Hardin	1239	631
Harlin	350	56
Harrison	891	896
Hart	586	528
Henderson	731	559
Henry	827	1022
Hickman	169	353
Hopkins	796	766
Jefferson	4023	2990
Jessamine	682	439
Johnson	150	214
Kenton	985	1228
Knox	648	159
Larue	478	849
Laurel	488	145
Lawrence	414	318
Letcher	No Returns	
Lewis	521	566
Lincoln	832	325
Livingston	403	265
Logan	1402	358
Madison	1313	564
Marion	765	629
Marshall	120	496
Mason	1631	953
McCracken	407	308
Meade	713	225
Mercer	734	1088
Montgomery	688	548
Monroe	586	379
Morgan	413	490
Muhlenberg	746	437
Nelson	1149	464
Nicholas	673	704
Ohio	718	542
Oldham	476	488
Owen	533	810
Owsley	330	248
Pendleton	375	599
Perry	No Returns	
Pike	225	140
Powell	No Returns	

Official returns for the Presidential elections of 1848 in Kentucky--  
continued.

<u>County</u>	<u>Taylor</u>	<u>Cass</u>
Pulaski	947	734
Rockcastle	497	96
Russell	519	180
Scott	797	734
Shelby	1434	716
Simpson	449	428
Spencer	460	351
Todd	808	409
Trigg	588	632
Trimble	361	486
Union	501	458
Warren	1226	603
Washington	721	678
Wayne	689	405
Whitley	584	93
Woodford	778	337
TOTAL	67,141	49,720

Majority for Taylor, 17,421

## APPENDIX 2

OFFICIAL RETURNS FOR THE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION  
OF 1851 IN KENTUCKY<sup>1</sup>

<u>County</u>	<u>Clay</u>	<u>Dixon</u>	<u>Powell</u>
Adair	43	375	503
Allen	0	334	527
Anderson	16	282	641
Ballard	5	269	340
Barren	47	1217	1078
Bath	2	721	908
Boone	1	782	918
Bourbon	20	921	474
Boyle	0	548	308
Bracken	6	723	592
Breathett	27	147	311
Breckinridge	5	772	558
Bullitt	10	328	453
Butler	36	225	239
Caldwell	40	669	820
Calloway	1	212	709
Campbell	29	338	804
Carroll	5	431	447
Carter	6	174	575
Casey	13	368	246
Christian	14	926	823
Clarke	29	874	397
Clay	156	271	161
Clinton	1	173	295
Crittenden	2	393	425
Cumberland	1	428	193
Daviess	3	831	816
Edmonson	19	155	204
Estill	179	423	387
Fayette	110	1216	810
Fleming	2	928	788
Floyd	24	218	379
Franklin	12	809	967
Fulton	0	157	261
Gallatin	1	327	407
Garrard	198	814	272

<sup>1</sup> Louisville Daily Courier, September 9, 1851.



Official returns for the gubernatorial election of 1851 in Kentucky--  
continued.

<u>County</u>	<u>Clay</u>	<u>Dixon</u>	<u>Powell</u>
Grant	11	349	546
Graves	6	469	945
Grayson	15	392	434
Green	2	399	434
Greenup	10	420	493
Hancock	1	278	213
Hardin	31	846	617
Harlan	12	395	75
Harrison	12	724	906
Hart	5	735	578
Henderson	1	594	698
Henry	7	735	971
Hickman	0	134	358
Hopkins	0	694	814
Jefferson	18	3148	3018
Jessamine	57	553	502
Johnson	7	59	427
Kenton	11	798	1189
Knox	76	389	303
Larue	11	368	363
Laurel	46	321	264
Lawrence	2	334	392
Letcher	10	61	92
Lewis	33	369	522
Lincoln	66	576	314
Livingston	0	341	213
Logan	41	1184	388
Madison	670	718	513
Marion	18	680	750
Marshall	2	123	513
Mason	28	1371	905
McCracken	1	409	373
Meade	2	545	224
Mercer	55	492	969
Montgomery	0	676	577
Monroe	123	357	407
Muhlenberg	15	638	577
Morgan	19	358	700
Nelson	30	856	509
Nicholas	42	646	827
Ohio	113	558	635
Oldham	1	403	531
Owen	28	493	1094
Owsley	61	225	276
Pendleton	17	256	636
Perry	40	121	168
Pike	11	242	230
Pulaski	210	662	786

Official returns for the gubernatorial election of 1851 in Kentucky--  
continued.

<u>County</u>	<u>Clay</u>	<u>Dixon</u>	<u>Powell</u>
Rockcastle	128	396	135
Russell	5	404	182
Scott	27	685	1001
Shelby	3	1107	903
Simpson	0	380	401
Spencer	3	335	346
Taylor	3	251	442
Todd	75	604	431
Trigg	3	525	580
Trimble	1	298	533
Union	0	486	622
Warren	7	1077	763
Washington	99	586	705
Wayne	71	513	435
Whitley	95	422	203
Woodford	7	676	408
TOTAL	3,621	53,763	54,613

Plurality for Powell, 850.

# APPENDIX 3

## OFFICIAL RETURNS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS OF 1852 IN KENTUCKY<sup>1</sup>

<u>County</u>	<u>Scott</u>	<u>Pierce</u>
Adair	457	597
Allen	220	454
Anderson	292	606
Ballard	260	328
Barren	1119	967
Bath	587	785
Boone	800	769
Bourbon	978	528
Boyle	603	323
Bracken	638	517
Breathett	96	234
Breckinridge	842	440
Bullitt	403	446
Butler	312	269
Caldwell	731	874
Calloway	189	815
Campbell	577	1098
Carroll	446	473
Carter	180	497
Casey	474	230
Christian	973	805
Clarke	842	322
Clay	278	185
Clinton	276	318
Crittenden	396	486
Cumberland	501	157
Daviess	1027	711
Edmonson	208	218
Estill	358	322
Fayette	1376	809
Fleming	888	698
Floyd	165	222
Franklin	833	759
Fulton	152	233
Gallatin	372	411

<sup>1</sup>Frankfort Commonwealth, November 22, 1852.

Official returns for the Presidential elections of 1852 in Kentucky--  
continued.

<u>County</u>	<u>Scott</u>	<u>Pierce</u>
Garrard	863	236
Grant	437	572
Graves	446	971
Grayson	433	394
Green	422	487
Greenup	637	660
Hancock	249	205
Hardin	1007	619
Harlan	327	65
Harrison	802	947
Hart	455	578
Henderson	616	635
Henry	744	983
Hickman	155	379
Hopkins	737	809
Jefferson	3665	3791
Jessamine	556	476
Johnson	64	299
Kenton	975	1384
Knox	487	164
Larue	417	348
Laurel	372	187
Lawrence	385	362
Letcher	63	78
Lewis	400	503
Lincoln	674	338
Livingston	312	267
Logan	1294	384
Madison	976	541
Marion	782	763
Marshall	91	425
Mason	1337	896
McCracken	385	416
Meade	647	230
Mercer	594	914
Montgomery	518	389
Monroe	377	350
Morgan	316	509
Muhlenberg	814	553
Nelson	958	487
Nicholas	592	721
Ohio	701	624
Oldham	388	486
Owen	505	1186
Owsley	294	326
Pendleton	262	570
Perry	130	177
Pike	221	194

Official returns for the Presidential elections of 1852 in Kentucky--  
continued.

<u>County</u>	<u>Scott</u>	<u>Pierce</u>
Powell	111	133
Pulaski	707	622
Rockcastle	326	97
Russeil	437	195
Scott	729	888
Shelby	1184	753
Simpson	389	380
Spencer	331	340
Taylor	264	527
Todd	652	422
Trigg	560	629
Trimble	300	491
Union	499	612
Warren	982	600
Washington	637	680
Wayne	463	342
Whitley	No Returns	
Woodford	706	410
TOTAL	57,068	53,806

Majority for Scott, 3,262

# APPENDIX 4

## OFFICIAL RETURNS FOR THE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION OF 1855 IN KENTUCKY<sup>1</sup>

<u>County</u>	<u>Morehead</u>	<u>Clarke</u>
Adair	431	942
Allen	605	680
Anderson	351	695
Ballard	372	562
Barren	1499	1160
Bath	673	1045
Boone	915	673
Bourbon	994	535
Boyle	679	356
Bracken	939	400
Breathett	136	493
Breckinridge	1128	407
Bullitt	600	431
Butler	629	361
Caldwell	436	548
Calloway	165	980
Campbell	956	1166
Carroll	457	458
Carter	354	628
Casey	639	428
Christian	1036	848
Clarke	955	330
Clay	265	372
Clinton	286	549
Crittenden	450	592
Cumberland	584	324
Daviess	962	826
Edmonson	188	400
Estill	558	619
Fayette	1439	815
Fleming	1120	715
Floyd	153	769
Franklin	946	764
Fulton	197	336
Gallatin	450	289

<sup>1</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, September 8, 1855.

Official returns for the gubernatorial election of 1855 in Kentucky--  
continued.

<u>County</u>	<u>Morehead</u>	<u>Clarke</u>
Garrard	976	367
Grant	735	541
Graves	539	1230
Grayson	523	600
Green	478	682
Greenup	942	542
Hancock	418	350
Hardin	1391	586
Harlan	398	332
Harrison	1052	860
Hart	598	791
Henderson	881	657
Henry	806	944
Hickman	173	512
Hopkins	925	1066
Jefferson	4417	2311
Jessamine	565	505
Johnson	36	597
Kenton	1275	1293
Knox	562	336
Larue	585	391
Laurel	373	441
Lawrence	530	382
Letcher	73	30
Lewis	610	405
Lincoln	878	469
Livingston	493	593
Logan	1539	386
Lyon	225	302
Madison	1287	810
Marion	443	1172
Marshall	104	803
Mason	1355	728
McCracken	648	397
Meade	786	333
McLean	423	421
Mercer	749	792
Montgomery	603	428
Monroe	506	624
Morgan	379	1040
Muhlenberg	894	834
Nelson	818	1025
Nicholas	759	699
Ohio	931	805
Oldham	424	485
Owen	575	1396
Owsley	319	478
Pendleton	779	356

Official returns for the gubernatorial election of 1855 in Kentucky--  
continued.

<u>County</u>	<u>Morehead</u>	<u>Clarke</u>
Perry	126	256
Pike	108	712
Powell	159	177
Pulaski	1083	1293
Rockcastle	416	218
Russell	499	375
Scott	765	898
Shelby	1320	611
Simpson	437	533
Spencer	438	428
Taylor	371	611
Todd	667	554
Trigg	504	728
Trimble	275	505
Union	694	739
Warren	1382	632
Washington	467	1120
Wayne	667	663
Whitley	485	376
Woodford	683	357
TOTALS	69,816	65,413

Majority for Morehead, 4,403



## APPENDIX 5

OFFICIAL RETURNS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION  
OF 1856 IN KENTUCKY<sup>1</sup>

<u>County</u>	<u>Fillmore</u>	<u>Buchanan</u>
Adair -x	455	1033
Allen	537	713
Anderson	299	737
Ballard	323	655
Barren	1561	1232
Bath	652	1028
Boone	937	818
Bourbon	957	607
Boyle	676	362
Bracken -x	876	742
Breathett	112	502
Breckinridge	1003	628
Bullitt	545	561
Butler	571	451
Caldwell	463	607
Calloway	206	1209
Campbell	905	1219
Carroll	439	511
Carter	298	787
Casey	601	415
Christian	1880	1098
Clarke	946	418
Clay	421	389
Clinton	261	522
Crittenden -x	506	664
Cumberland	635	335
Daviess	954	965
Edmonson	161	421
Estill	474	543
Fayette	1404	1006
Fleming	949	848
Floyd	85	939
Franklin	883	794
Fulton	340	460
Gallatin	310	269

<sup>1</sup>Louisville Daily Courier, December 11, 1856.

Official returns for the Presidential election of 1856 in Kentucky--  
continued.

<u>County</u>	<u>Fillmore</u>	<u>Buchanan</u>
Garrard	866	423
Grant	639	676
Graves	475	1380
Grayson	477	651
Green	408	639
Greenup	866	865
Hancock	425	407
Hardin	1226	932
Harlan -x	331	264
Harrison	965	1095
Hart	509	816
Henderson	865	767
Henry	727	1050
Hickman	244	631
Hopkins	857	1133
Jefferson	4982	2972
Jessamine	614	553
Johnson	14	708
Kenton	1246	1643
Knox	588	271
Larue	546	489
Lawrence	466	478
Letcher -x	79	287
Lewis	586	631
Lincoln	796	459
Livingston	457	372
Logan	1613	506
Lyon	253	390
Madison	1087	832
Marion -x	418	1154
Marshall	104	943
Mason	1308	994
McCracken	660	505
McLean	404	476
Meade	714	402
Mercer	615	1121
Montgomery	546	451
Monroe	561	661
Morgan	289	1068
Muhlenberg	733	747
Nelson	793	1041
Nicholas	666	709
Ohio	813	901
Oldham	387	528
Owen	554	1579
Owsley	335	401
Pendleton	746	732
Perry	173	295

Official returns for the Presidential election of 1856 in Kentucky--  
continued.

<u>County</u>	<u>Fillmore</u>	<u>Buchanan</u>
Pike	161	706
Powell	167	177
Pulaski	906	1336
Rockcastle -v	417	184
Rowan -x	106	287
Russell	448	429
Scott	674	1049
Shelby	1262	773
Simpson	437	537
Spencer	391	434
Taylor	317	672
Todd	762	573
Trigg	581	895
Trimble	275	599
Union -x	653	925
Warren	1354	695
Washington	441	1145
Wayne	515	699
Whitley	572	338
Woodford	672	420
TOTALS	67,413	74,642

-x: Returns thrown out due to irregularities  
in the returns.

Adjusted majority for Buchanan, 6,118

## APPENDIX 6

OFFICIAL RETURNS FOR THE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION  
OF 1859 IN KENTUCKY<sup>1</sup>

<u>County</u>	<u>Bell</u>	<u>Magoffin</u>
Adair	543	402
Allen	507	759
Anderson	333	740
Ballard	356	588
Barren	1633	1419
Bath	749	1042
Boone	859	942
Bourbon	900	673
Boyle	771	331
Bracken	778	741
Breathett	144	508
Breckinridge	908	650
Bullitt	402	484
Butler	570	466
Caldwell	380	562
Calloway	238	1121
Campbell	608	1264
Carroll	374	523
Carter	381	848
Casey	705	438
Christian	971	1051
Clarke	953	408
Clay	428	459
Clinton	314	571
Crittenden	482	636
Cumberland	668	377
Daviess	1246	1408
Edmonson		No Returns
Estill	557	578
Fayette	1403	992
Fleming	977	910
Floyd	258	799
Franklin	856	826
Fulton	256	405
Gallatin	385	590

<sup>1</sup> Louisville Daily Courier, August 31, 1859.

Official returns for the gubernatorial election of 1859 in Kentucky--  
continued.

<u>County</u>	<u>Bell</u>	<u>Magoffin</u>
Garrard	927	390
Grant	677	787
Graves	503	1301
Grayson	492	532
Green	461	688
Greenup	1089	863
Hancock	419	477
Hardin	888	947
Harlan	433	271
Harrison	926	1310
Hart	445	786
Henderson	903	883
Henry	634	1028
Hickman	253	581
Hopkins	796	1055
Jackson	149	151
Jefferson	4378	3267
Jessamine	620	569
Johnson	40	779
Kenton	1013	1641
Knox	730	375
Larue	470	535
Laurel	409	377
Lawrence	670	584
Letcher	111	265
Lewis	660	684
Lincoln	922	452
Livingston	398	343
Logan	1418	528
Lyon	229	363
Madison	1301	949
Marion	501	1130
Marshall	180	855
Mason	1246	884
McCracken	609	527
McLean		No Returns
Meade	583	459
Mercer	718	1040
Montgomery	595	503
Monroe	590	651
Morgan	480	1202
Muhlenberg	858	971
Nelson	669	976
Nicholas	731	1005
Ohio	805	1001
Oldham	357	529
Owen	429	1435
Owsley	398	423

Official returns for the gubernatorial election of 1859 in Kentucky--  
continued.

<u>County</u>	<u>Bell</u>	<u>Magoffin</u>
Pendleton	616	856
Perry	183	253
Pike	168	674
Powell	178	190
Pulaski	1221	1342
Rockcastle	495	241
Rowan	137	239
Russell	500	429
Scott	742	1062
Shelby	1193	765
Simpson	410	551
Spencer	367	426
Taylor	351	652
Todd	618	519
Trigg	564	733
Trimble	191	466
Union	510	775
Warren	1182	866
Washington	544	1056
Wayne	749	823
Whitley	619	330
Woodford	639	472
TOTALS	67,271	76,187

Majority for Magoffin, 8,916

## APPENDIX 7

FIRST BALLOT OF THE NATIONAL UNION CONVENTION FOR PRESIDENT<sup>1</sup>

STATES	CANDIDATES									
	Bell	Botts	Crittenden	Everett	Goggin	Graham	Houston	McLean	Rives	Sharkey
Alabama				9						
Arkansas	1						3			
Connecticut	2-1/2		1				2-1/2			
Delaware	3									
Florida					3					
Georgia						10				
Illinois		5-1/2					5-1/2			
Indiana								13		
Kentucky			12							
Maine	8									
Maryland	7-1/2						1/2			
Massachusetts				13						
Mississippi										7
Missouri			9							
New Jersey	2			2			1	2		
New York	4		1			2	28			
North Carolina						10				
Ohio	11	2		1			5	4		
Pennsylvania	17-1/2						7-1/2	2		
Texas							4			
Tennessee	12									
Vermont			5							
Virginia		2							13	
TOTALS	68-1/2	9-1/2	28	25	3	22	57	21	13	7

<sup>1</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, May 14, 1860.

## APPENDIX 8

SECOND BALLOT OF THE NATIONAL UNION CONVENTION FOR PRESIDENT<sup>1</sup>

STATES	CANDIDATES							
	Be11	Botts	Crittenden	Everett	Graham	Houston	McLean	Sharkey
Alabama	9							
Arkansas						4		
Connecticut	3-1/2					2-1/2		
Delaware	3							
Florida	3							
Georgia					6-1/2	3-1/2		
Illinois		5-1/2				5-1/2		
Indiana	12			1				
Kentucky	4			1-1/2		6		1/2
Maine	8							
Maryland	7-1/2					1/2		
Massachusetts	12					1		
Mississippi								7
Missouri	1			6	1	1		
New Jersey	5			1				1
New York	4		1		1	29		
North Carolina					10			
Ohio	18					5	1	
Pennsylvania	19					7		
Tennessee	12							
Texas						4		
Vermont	5							
Virginia	13	2						
TOTALS	139	7-1/2	1	9-1/2	18-1/2	69	1	8-1/2

<sup>1</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, May 14, 1860.



APPENDIX 9  
THE COMPLETE ELECTION RETURNS FOR THE  
CLERK OF THE COURT OF APPEALS<sup>1</sup>

COUNTY	CANDIDATES			
	Combs (Union)	McClarty (Breckinridge Democrat )	Bolling (Douglas Democrat)	Hopkins (Independent)
Adair	421	257	346	3
Allen	398	301	105	0
Anderson	375	496	138	4
Ballard	493	290	56	20
Barren	1242	264	376	5
Bath	663	787	20	6
Boone	953	696	160	0
Bourbon	999	577	11	0
Boyd	512	167	123	7
Boyle	638	300	56	3
Bracken	1035	438	39	3
Breathitt	118	481	1	0
Breckinridge	774	446	94	4
Bullitt	472	120	244	14
Butler	452	95	11	0
Caldwell	317	369	28	2
Calloway	212	733	33	6
Campbell	1332	536	63	0
Carroll	459	515	47	0
Casey	549	217	106	0
Christian	1012	225	535	3
Clarke	884	246	22	1
Clay	381	312	3	1
Clinton	247	33	283	7
Crittenden	454	233	23	7
Cumberland	593	61	146	7
Carter	380	503	77	0
Daviess	659	933	130	8
Edmondson	150	153	62	10
Estill	517	486	1	0
Fayette	1504	860	15	1
Fleming	911	506	31	1

<sup>1</sup> Louisville Daily Courier, September 6, 1860.

The complete election returns for the Clerk of the Court of Appeals--  
continued.

COUNTY	CANDIDATES			
	Combs	McClarty	Bolling	Hopkins
Floyd	47	773	1	0
Franklin	828	801	3	2
Fulton	278	222	59	1
Gallatin	363	425	12	0
Garrard	884	119	53	6
Grant	702	692	59	1
Graves	694	880	88	10
Grayson	540	208	13	2
Green	428	199	63	0
Greenup	716	315	38	2
Hancock	382	369	34	0
Hardin	1098	86	124	28
Harlan	442	219	16	1
Harrison	979	1168	30	0
Hart	531	142	424	15
Henderson	827	316	30	104
Henry	787	691	99	14
Hickman	270	484	42	6
Hopkins	627	382	23	5
Jackson	146	186	0	0
Jefferson	5609	1489	728	98
Jessamine	619	509	11	1
Johnson	18	546	5	1
Kenton	1817	959	143	0
Knox	527	208	69	13
Larue	354	24	278	7
Laurel	353	287	2	2
Lawrence	550	548	32	1
Letcher	82	271	0	22
Lewis	584	434	37	0
Lincoln	792	361	13	3
Livingston	390	151	53	0
Logan	1182	122	217	1
Lyon	223	334	2	0
Madison	1165	784	38	0
Magoffin	134	224	99	0
Marion	493	178	760	5
Marshall	138	870	48	0
Mason	1538	851	83	0
McCracken	803	168	104	1
McLean	354	162	129	20
Meade	659	226	168	11
Mercer	666	703	91	8
Metcalfe	454	12	171	0
Monroe	470	188	143	1

The complete election returns for the Clerk of the Court of Appeals--  
continued.

COUNTY	CANDIDATES			
	Combs	McClarty	Bolling	Hopkins
Montgomery	578	425	15	0
Morgan	259	764	0	0
Muhlenberg	706	45	377	6
Nelson	650	778	387	6
Nicholas	774	968	9	0
Ohio	657	124	325	0
Oldham	851	171	45	186
Owen	559	1393	5	7
Owsley	399	310	3	3
Pendleton	765	688	69	1
Perry	133	227	0	2
Pike	91	611	4	0
Powell	197	190	2	0
Pulaski	696	976	2	0
Rockcastle	383	208	4	3
Rowan	107	190	11	3
Russell	427	311	22	0
Scott	737	1104	2	4
Simpson	411	305	93	0
Shelby	1297	488	26	12
Spencer	398	75	130	2
Taylor	294	47	216	1
Todd	613	120	92	2
Trigg	491	429	90	0
Trimble	67	211	0	0
Union	543	330	153	17
Warren	1119	141	424	1
Washington	685	250	456	3
Wayne	567	626	4	0
Whitley	439	242	39	0
Woodford	665	448	2	0
Wolfe	122	204	10	2
Webster	188	191	79	13
TOTALS	68,165	44,942	10,971	829

## APPENDIX 10

THE COMPLETE ELECTION RETURNS FOR THE  
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1860<sup>1</sup>

COUNTY	CANDIDATES			
	Bell (Union)	Breckinridge (Southern Democrat)	Douglas (Northern Democrat)	Lincoln (Republican)
Adair	403	348	355	1
Allen	507	229	404	0
Anderson	296	670	132	0
Ballard	481	452	271	1
Barren	1086	289	492	14
Bath	694	878	143	0
Boone	881	739	228	1
Bourbon	966	755	29	3
Boyd	488	191	115	18
Boyle	697	331	52	3
Bracken	881	644	246	4
Breathitt	113	459	1	0
Breckinridge	956	281	382	3
Bullitt	451	96	441	2
Butler	500	119	321	5
Caldwell	446	618	48	3
Calloway	274	904	118	0
Campbell	854	520	960	314
Carroll	436	572	70	0
Carter	301	616	146	1
Casey	541	176	202	8
Christian	955	411	467	1
Clarke	959	391	60	1
Clay	341	353	108	4
Clinton	261	192	255	3
Crittenden	553	630	67	1
Cumberland	584	82	192	7
Daviess	1074	654	530	7
Edmondson	185	179	137	15
Estill	433	512	19	56
Fayette	1411	1051	99	5
Fleming	907	827	100	2

<sup>1</sup>Louisville Daily Journal, November 26, 1860.

The complete election returns for the Presidential election of 1860--  
continued.

COUNTY	CANDIDATES			
	Bell	Breckinridge	Douglas	Lincoln
Floyd	64	609	0	0
Franklin	790	907	37	0
Fulton	300	307	107	0
Gallatin	383	420	34	0
Garrard	730	195	145	21
Grant	677	709	112	0
Graves	660	1225	140	0
Grayson	497	387	219	8
Green	420	367	188	2
Greenup	795	350	89	4
Hancock	397	427	65	3
Hardin	1029	144	912	6
Harlan	329	264	4	2
Harrison	960	1272	98	0
Hart	535	153	751	1
Henderson	846	498	211	5
Henry	672	773	390	2
Hickman	284	618	66	1
Hopkins	731	666	171	2
Jackson	140	136	13	101
Jefferson	4896	1122	3441	106
Jessamine	603	559	37	3
Johnson	22	618	26	0
Kenton	1327	650	1312	267
Knox	579	211	76	11
Larue	401	32	450	3
Laurel	385	370	8	10
Lawrence	433	515	10	0
Letcher	91	281	1	0
Lewis	506	501	73	31
Lincoln	743	380	72	4
Livingston	460	350	96	0
Logan	1490	169	342	3
Lyon	304	431	11	0
Madison	1038	914	56	85
Magoffin	173	311	4	0
Marion	475	281	904	0
Marshall	176	797	107	0
Mason	1305	799	247	26
McCracken	710	244	280	8
McLean	242	132	162	0
Meade	664	152	305	1
Mercer	608	992	224	2
Metcalfe	527	34	237	3
Monroe	494	324	142	3

The complete election returns for the Presidential election of 1860--  
continued.

COUNTY	CANDIDATES			
	Bell	Breckinridge	Douglas	Lincoln
Montgomery	540	489	49	0
Morgan	189	776	0	0
Muhlenberg	741	51	557	4
Nelson	609	333	641	0
Nicholas	690	988	26	1
Ohio	677	201	582	2
Oldham	372	299	263	2
Owen	539	1760	43	0
Owsley	330	370	5	1
Pendleton	758	807	231	2
Perry	128	293	3	1
Pike	65	726	1	1
Powell	161	184	4	0
Pulaski	877	1098	56	55
Rockcastle	374	257	9	64
Rowan	121	189	23	0
Russell	427	299	48	1
Scott	734	1176	44	0
Shelby	1176	594	228	0
Simpson	404	319	194	0
Spencer	334	94	304	0
Taylor	312	151	457	1
Todd	642	274	147	4
Trigg	623	646	177	1
Trimble	258	581	84	1
Union	651	464	459	0
Warren	1126	182	615	3
Washington	318	290	610	1
Wayne	603	695	7	5
Webster	205	575	176	0
Whitley	519	318	14	7
Wolfe	109	352	0	0
Woodford	633	547	16	0
TOTALS	66,051	53,143	25,638	1,364

## CRITICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Newspapers

Due to the brief nature of the Constitutional Union Party, coupled with the fact the party made no lasting significant impact on the nation, the party and its members left few records and papers. The Union documents that do remain are helpful but very incomplete. To reconstruct the day-to-day activities of the party and its members the single most important source of information consists of the newspapers of the period, 1859-1861.

The Louisville Daily Journal, edited by George D. Prentice, provided the most complete record on the Union party in Kentucky. Prentice was a conservative political leader in the state, and he utilized his paper to promote the party of his choice. The decade, from the early 1850's through the early 1860's, saw the demise of the conservative Whig party in Kentucky and the rise and fall of the conservative American, Opposition and Constitutional Union parties. Prentice was actively involved in each of these. As early as October, 1859 the Daily Journal was calling for the formation of a conservative Union party. When Crittenden organized such a movement, the Journal was the only one of Louisville's three major papers to endorse it. Thereafter, for the duration of the Union movement, the Journal carried as comprehensive a record of the Union party in Kentucky as space permitted. The Journal did

not limit itself to strict reporting; on numerous occasions, Prentice utilized the paper as a vehicle to make suggestions for running the party. Several of them were adopted by the Kentucky State Union Committee. In addition to local news, the Louisville Daily Journal carried all the addresses and notices of the National Union Committee and the significant events of the Union movement in other states.

The Louisville Daily Courier, edited by Reuben T. Durrett, took nearly the opposite viewpoint on most issues from the Journal. The Courier invariably was able to find fault with the strict Union philosophy and in turn promoted the candidacy and ideology of the Breckinridge Democracy. A close review of the bickerings between the two newspapers on political philosophy and mechanics readily exhibited the strengths and weaknesses of each party. After the defeat of Breckinridge, the Courier was one of the chief secessionist exponents in Kentucky. In late 1862, after having been declared treasonous and closed down, the Courier was sold to the Louisville Daily Democrat.

The Louisville Daily Democrat, edited by John H. Harney, was the only major Kentucky newspaper that promoted the candidacy of Stephen A. Douglas. Early in the 1860 campaign the Democrat was critical of Lincoln. As the campaign progressed, the main thrust of the paper turned against the Breckinridge faction for splitting the Democratic party. During the course of the campaign the Democrat's criticism of the Union party lessened until immediately preceding the election, Union activities were not mentioned at all or in a very favorable way.



Three other Kentucky papers remain in sufficient quantity to be helpful in a study of the period. The two important papers of Frankfort, the Frankfort Commonwealth and the Frankfort Kentucky Yeoman, espoused the Unionist and Breckinridge Democratic viewpoints, respectively. One drawback to the use of the Frankfort journals was that both filled a large percentage of their news space with articles reprinted from other papers, usually without a comment from the Frankfort editor on their veracity. A strong Breckinridge paper, the Lexington Kentucky Statesman, was helpful in finding contemporary criticism of the Union movement in Kentucky. The Statesman rarely mentioned the Union movement except in a critical way.

Three out-of-state papers were extremely informative. The New York Express was one of the strongest Union papers in the nation. It carried all the Union party news in New York and the activities of the party at the national level. As space allowed, it also covered the Union movement in other parts of the country. Since Kentucky was a Union stronghold, the state Unionists received a great deal of attention. The Express was especially helpful in the formative meetings of the party. The Louisville papers carried small items on the December, 1859 meetings, whereas the Express had long daily articles on the organization of the party. The Baltimore Clipper and the Washington National Intelligencer were generally informative but particularly so during the days of the Union National Convention in Baltimore. These two Union papers were able to provide daily accounts in great detail of the activities of the convention.

Two other out-of-state papers provided some additional information. The New York Times gave a good general overview of the whole campaign, delved into private predictions and gave Kentucky a great deal of coverage when discussing the Union party. The paper also carried several editorials from Kentuckians on the election. However, nearly all the articles were from Unionists. The Nashville Banner provided some information on isolated incidents that affected the campaign and election in Kentucky.

#### Manuscripts

The Chairman of the National Union Committee was John J. Crittenden. He was active not only at the national level but campaigned for the Union cause in the border slave states, primarily in Kentucky. The John J. Crittenden Papers (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress) were of particular benefit in determining many of Crittenden's public and private views on men and events of the day. Much less complete but of some help were the John J. Crittenden Letters (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress), used on microfilm in the Manuscript Division, University of Kentucky Library. A third collection of Crittenden correspondence was Mrs. Chapman Coleman, The Life of John J. Crittenden (Philadelphia, 1873), 2 vols. This was probably the most helpful collection for it contained, in addition to letters with great state and national leaders, letters to and from his family. In these, Crittenden was quite open as to his true feelings about his contemporaries, the chances of success of the Union party and his own personal goals and lack of desire for the Union presidential nomination.

Party Documents

Other materials that were essential to the study of the Unionists in Kentucky were the actual party records. Two important policy statements were published in Union papers and later in pamphlet form. In February, 1860, the Central Executive Union Committee to the People of the United States (Washington, 1860) was published. It provided a statement justifying the formation of the party and urged, with specific guidelines, the formation of state and local Union committees. It is probably the most succinct statement of early party doctrine and organization available. The second national publication, in August, 1860, was the Address of the National Executive Committee of the Constitutional Union Party to the People of the United States (Washington, 1860). A campaign document, it was a pamphlet praising Bell and Everett. However, in the process it provided a clear picture of many of the Union arguments against the candidates on the other tickets.

Crittenden the campaigner was depicted in a pamphlet, John J. Crittenden, The Union, the Constitution and the Laws (Louisville, 1860). Originally a campaign speech which was printed in total by the Louisville Daily Journal, it was considered one of the best statements of the Union position on slavery and secession and the soundest denunciation of the Breckinridge Democrats. The speech was often quoted, and late in the campaign the Journal printed it in pamphlet form for distribution.

### Kentucky Histories

Among the secondary materials, the best overview of the Constitutional Union Party and its place in Kentucky history was provided by several general histories of the state. The most detailed and helpful of these, relative to the Union movement, was Lewis Collins, Richard Collins, ed., A History of Kentucky (Frankfort, 1966; first published 1873), 2 vols. In addition to a history of the state, the volumes contained brief biographies of important state leaders, county histories and a daily log of significant events that occurred in Kentucky, arranged chronologically. Two other histories that provided information on the Union party in Kentucky were Thomas D. Clark, A History of Kentucky (New York, 1937), and Nathaniel Shaler, Kentucky (New York, 1884). Both dealt with the history of Kentucky from its formation and were able to give but a little space to the Unionists. Other Kentucky histories that were of some assistance were Zachariah Smith, A History of Kentucky (Louisville, 1882), and Elizabeth Kinkead, A History of Kentucky (New York, 1896).

### General Books and Articles

Background material for the Union party in Kentucky was provided by numerous volumes that dealt with Kentucky and the South in the several political movements that preceded the Union party. The single most informative of these was Wallace B. Turner, Kentucky in a Decade of Change (Lexington, 1954). It had an excellent bibliography for Kentucky in the 1850's. The Union movement was

touched on lightly, but it provided excellent background material for the party and how it evolved out of the Whig, American and Opposition parties. Agnes McGann, Nativism in Kentucky to 1860 (Washington, 1944), gave a thorough study of the American or Know-Nothing party in Kentucky. Less definitive for Kentucky, but also helpful, were: W Darrel Overdyke, The Know-Nothing Party in the South (Baton Rouge, 1950); Arthur C. Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Washington, 1914); and Carl Brand, "The History of the Know-Nothing Party in Indiana," Indiana Magazine of History XVIII (Mar., June, Sept. 1922), 47-81, 177-206, 266-306.

Other secondary materials that were helpful were a history of the Union party at the national level and biographies of two of the party's leaders. John B. Stabler, A History of the Constitutional Union Party (New York, 1954) discussed the party across the nation, but since Kentucky was a stronghold of the party it was given particular attention, as was Kentuckian Crittenden. Albert D. Kirwan, John J. Crittenden (Lexington, 1962), presents the most complete biography on Crittenden. It covers Crittenden's entire life, of which the Union movement was but a small part. Joseph Parks, John Bell (Baton Rouge, 1950), was slightly disappointing. Although Bell was the Presidential candidate of the Union party, he did very little personal campaigning and had little influence on the outcome of the election in Kentucky.

Several sources provided information about the actual election of 1860 and its aftermath. The best of these was Jasper B. Shannon and Ruth McQuown, Presidential Politics in Kentucky (Lexington, 1950). It provided a statistical breakdown by county

of the election returns, and how they compared to previous years' returns. Another excellent source, with a strong bibliography, was Richard Hedlund, Kentucky and the Presidential Election of 1860 (Lexington, 1960). Ollinger Crenshaw, The Slave States in the Presidential Election of 1860 (Gloucester, Mass., 1969; first published 1945), provided a review of the election across the South, but once again Kentucky drew some special attention as being one of the few states that did not vote Breckinridge Democratic. Edward C. Smith, The Borderland in the Civil War (New York, 1927), dealt with the slave border states after the outbreak of the war and had a chapter dealing with Kentucky's neutrality and the reasons for it. Two other works touched on the subject of Kentucky and the election and its immediate aftermath. Thomas Speed, The Union Cause in Kentucky, 1860-1865 (New York, 1907), mentioned the election briefly as a prelude to the war. Betty Carolyn Congleton, George D. Prentice and His Editorial Policy in National Politics, 1830-1860 (Lexington, 1961), did not dwell at length on Prentice's involvement with the Union cause but was very helpful. An article that provided information on the Union party in Kentucky after 1860 was William T. McKinney, "Defeat of the Secessionists in 1861," Journal of Negro History, I (Oct. 1916), 377-91.

Three general works that provided miscellaneous information were: M. W. McCluskey, Political Textbook Encyclopedia (Philadelphia, 1860); Joseph N. Kane, Facts About the Presidents (New York, 1964); and A. K. McClure, Our Presidents and How We Make Them (New York, 1900).